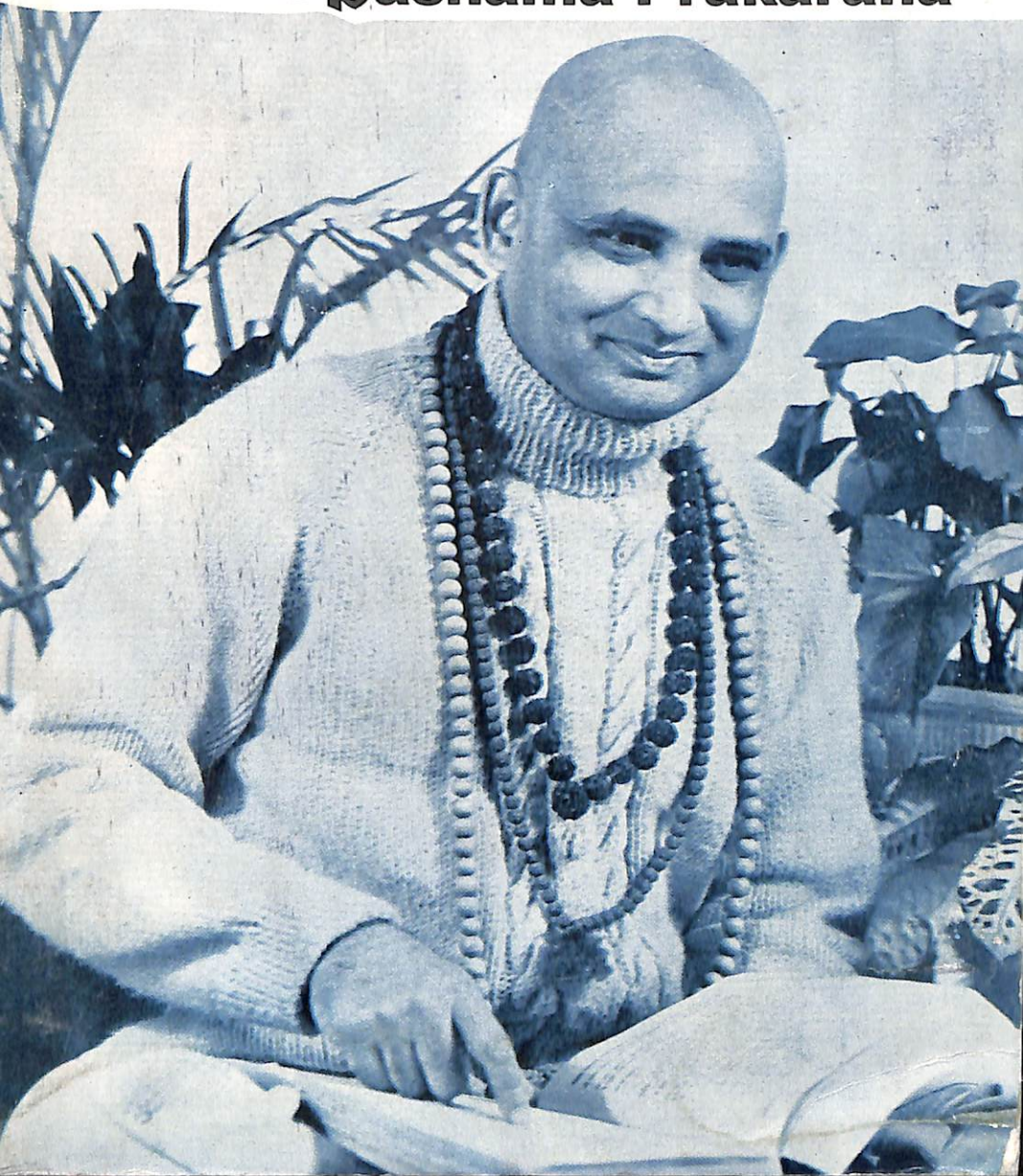
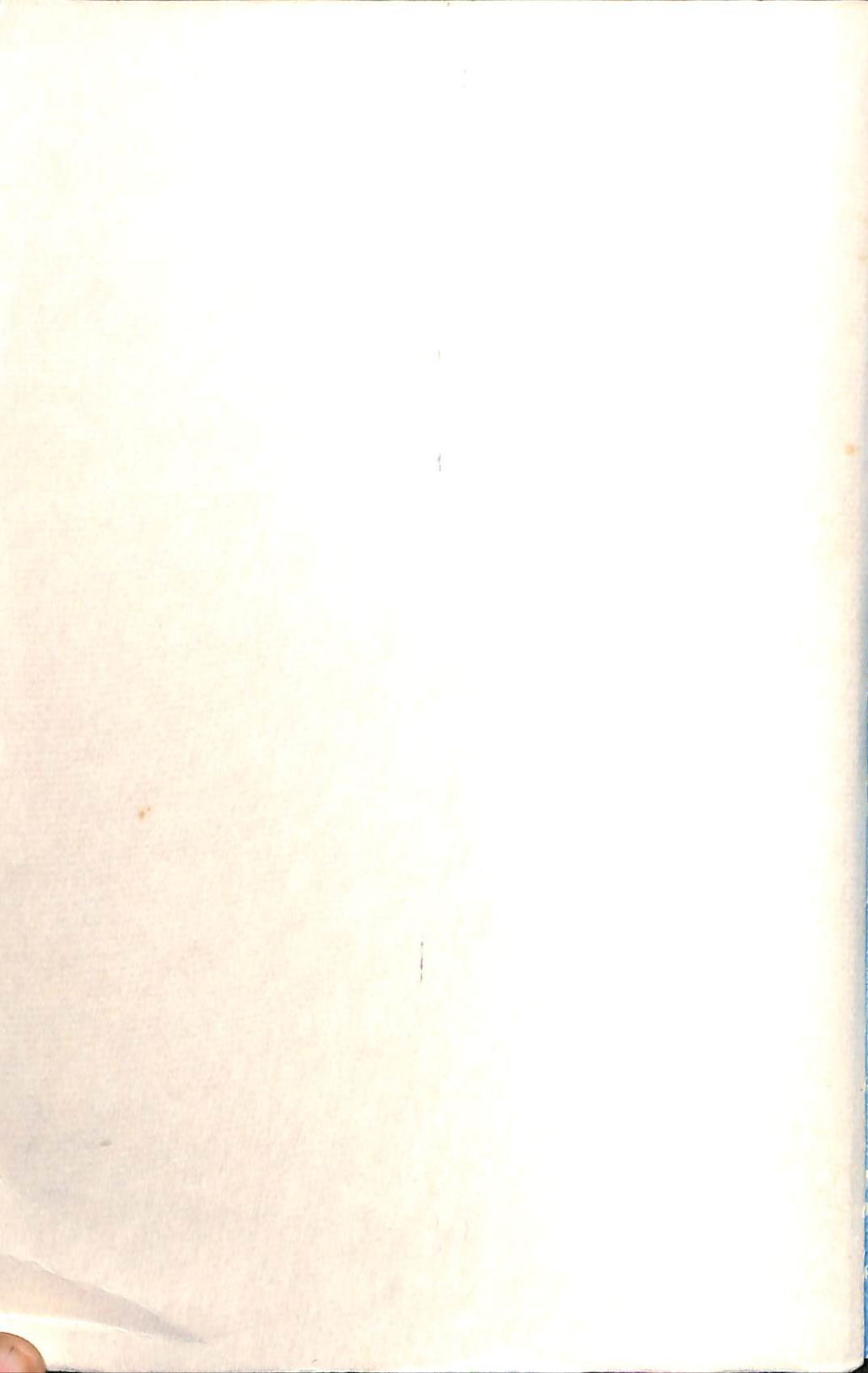


YOGA VASISTHA

by Swami Jyotirmayananda

Vol. III: Upashama Prakarana





YOGA VASISTHA

Vol. III

by Swami Jyotirmayananda

Upashama Prakarana



YOGA RESEARCH FOUNDATION

(Non-profit Organization)

Aims and Objects

To spread the laws of spiritual life.

2. To promote understanding of the unity of life among all people, regardless of race, sect, creed and sex, and also to promote harmony among all religions by emphasizing the fundamental unity of all prophets, saints, sages and teachers.

3. To help suffering humanity by teaching the higher moral standards, prayers and meditation.

4. To give regular classes in the teachings of Yoga, Vedanta and Indian Philosophy.

5. To promote Universal Peace and Universal Love.

6. To promote the cultural growth of humanity on the basis of everlasting spiritual values of life.

7. To guide students and devotees all over the world.

8. To print and publish spiritual literature.

9. Anyone devoted to the ideals of truth, non-violence and purity can be a member of this Foundation.

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YOGA
VASISTHA
Vol. III



DEDICATION

I dedicate this book to Sri Swami Lalitananda, the Vice-president of the Yoga Research Foundation, who is the illustrious author of *Yoga In Life*, Editor of the *International Yoga Guide*, as well as the poet-composer of *Yogic Mystic Songs for Meditation* in six volumes.

It was the dispassion and intense aspiration of Sri Swami Lalitananda that resulted in my giving the complete series of lectures on *Yoga Vasistha* as well as the writing of this present book.

The vast work of promoting my teachings and works in the West has been carried on untiringly, with an unassuming zeal, and utter self-effacement, by this noble Sanyasin for over 20 years. The spiritual world will ever remain deeply indebted to her for the formation and existence of the mighty organization—the Yoga Research Foundation—which is a fountain-source of light and wisdom for spiritual aspirants all over the world.

May God bless her abundantly!

Swami Jyotirmayananda

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5
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PUBLISHER'S NOTE

Yoga Vasistha can bring a complete transformation in human personality; even like the beggar of old fairy tales who turned into a King when a charmed golden ring fell into his hand, just so, whosoever holds this book, turning the pages with an inquisitive mind and a heart searching for truth, will discover the infinite beauty of his inner Self. *Yoga Vasistha* nourishes the soul and awakens a yearning for freedom and an exquisite peace unknown before.

This unique book par excellence has been long awaited by advanced Vedantins and Yogis of India, because it is only available in rare editions of the last century. And it is what the enquiring mind of the West has been desperately needing since they heard the remarks of Schopenhauer, "In the whole world there is no study so beneficial and so elevating as that of the *Upanishads*. It has been the solace of my life; it will be the solace of my death."

H. H. Sri Swami Jyotirmayananda, internationally known lecturer and writer of over fifty books on Yoga and Vedanta philosophy, has been interpreting and commenting on *Yoga Vasistha* for over 30 years: first in India for 9 years at the Yoga Vedanta Forest Academy, Sivananda Ashram, Himalayas; in Vedantic conferences in Amritsar, Ludhiana, and other parts of India, and also in Dehradun Women's Col-

lege. Since coming to the West, Swamiji had been lecturing in Puerto Rico for six years, followed by his weekly lectures here in Miami. Available on cassette tapes, these lectures are an undying treasure.

Just as King Shah Jehan had the choice of only one type of food-grain while he was imprisoned for life, and he chose the garbanso because of its nourishment and adaptability to a variety of tasty dishes, so too, if I could have only one book for some extraordinary reason to read for the rest of my life, I would choose *Yoga Vasistha*. After a brief encounter with *Yoga Vasistha*, the reader will feel that all other books of philosophy have become like old crumbs on the table, while *Yoga Vasistha* stands like the sweet and vitalizing elixir of life.

Unfortunately, however, due to the lack of knowledge of *Yoga Vasistha*, the intelligensia of the West have been unable to realize the vast treasure of profound knowledge that lies hidden in this great work. Because of this reason, the wisdom of Vedanta has not been deeply understood and assimilated by them.

Yoga Vasistha encompasses in its powerful literature the dramatic stories of the inner states of the mind, and like a brilliant advocate, presents its brief with a convincing voice and expert phrasing. *Yoga Vasistha* has a mystic strategy that convinces the mind to undermine its fancies and imaginations leading to the realization that the world lies within the mind. Nothing is more inspiring and soul-stirring as when the mind lifts itself from the quagmire of false

perceptions of the senses and sees the contents of waking, dream and deep sleep as the refraction of the Light of Consciousness filtering through the layers of egoistic illusions.

The awe-inspiring awakening of the knowledge that "You are not this body, not this mind, and not this intellect" is uplifting and produces a vital change in the overall perception of the world. It is for this reason Sages warn immature aspirants against the wrong interpretations of this grand philosophy; they emphasize the fact that the wisdom of the *Yoga Vasistha* must be received under the guidance of an illumined teacher. For those who are endowed with a mighty strength of intellect and intense dispassion, therefore, *Yoga Vasistha* brings for them the clouds of mystic understanding that bursts into the flood of unique bliss.

The greatest literatures of the world have always incorporated in their writings parables, illustrations and stories to bring about a striking impression, even like that of a flash of lightning upon the sleeping mind in order to awaken it sharply to the light of the truth. *Yoga Vasistha* abounds with these. *Yoga Vasistha* in its broad spectrum encompasses topics such as the mysteries of the soul, death and reincarnation, the subtle operations of the unconscious mind which bring about repeated embodiments, the psychic powers, the mystic energy known as *Kundalini*, and the techniques of spiritual enquiry and meditation. A studious reader, therefore, will meet for the first time a challenge to his intellect to discover the secret wealth of the Self, and to explore the mysteries of the mind.

PUBLISHER'S NOTE

It is to be noted that humor and wit permeate the writings and lectures of Sri Swami Jyotirmayananda, much like the green creeper adorning the tree of Liberation. But behind this, Sri Swami Jyotirmayananda gives to the world his most memorable writing which has been guarded as a secret mystic wealth by the Sages of India for a long time. This book, by Sri Swami Jyotirmayananda, presents you with the key to heavenly bliss and perfection, and every page of this book is filled with his blessings.

May the golden sun of your eternal Self rise from behind the horizon of distractions and mental limitations and encompass you in the greatest of beauty and sublime love which are the very essence of your real Self!

Swami Lalitananda

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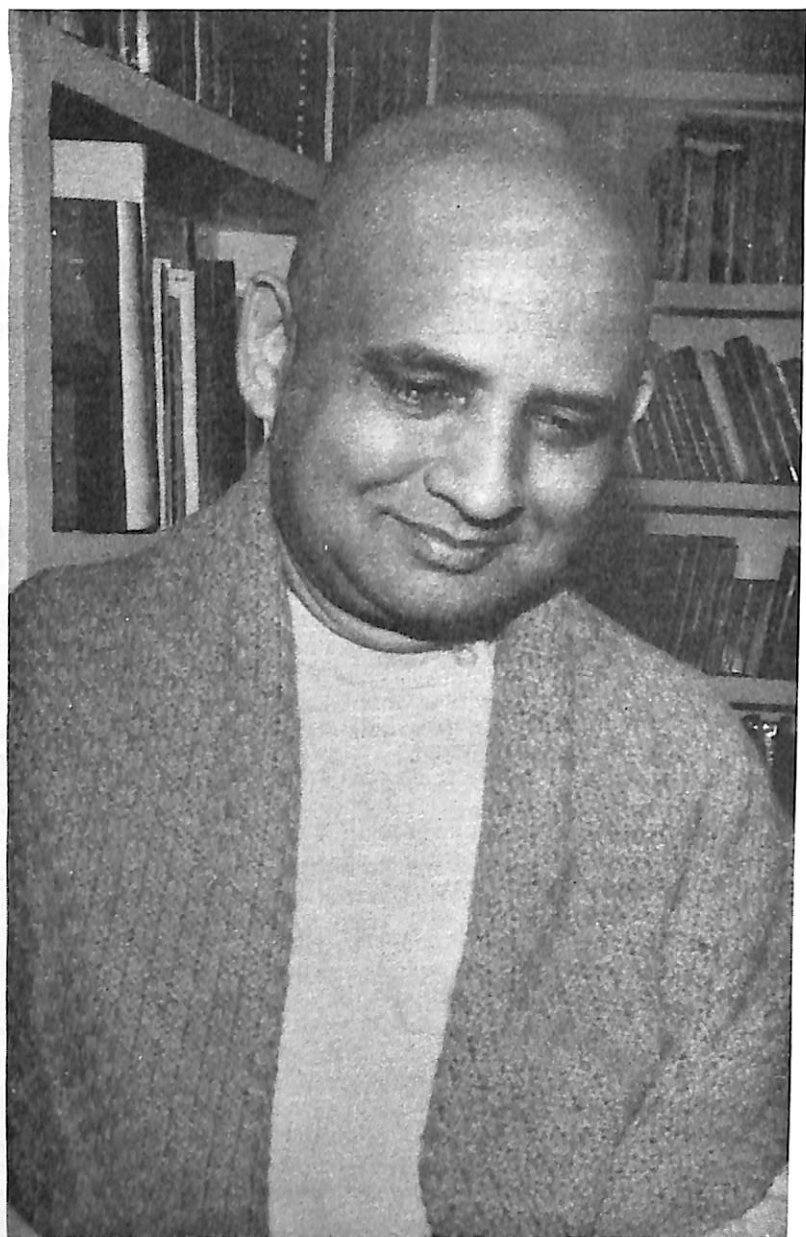
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**Drawings and Illustrations by Sushila.*



Author Swami Jyotirmayananda

INTRODUCTION

In the "Bala-Kanda" section of the *Ramayana* it is stated that Sri Rama was given spiritual instructions by Sage Vasistha. *Yoga Vasistha*, a complete and separate work in itself, is that teaching. While the *Ramayana*, the epic poem more popularly known throughout India and the world, describes the life and adventures of Sri Rama, the *Yoga Vasistha* presents his inner realization in detail for those who wish to intensify their spiritual life and deepen their understanding. A vast work of approximately 32,000 verses, the *Yoga Vasistha* was written by the great poet-sage Valmiki, as was the *Ramayana*, about 500 B.C. or earlier.

The *Yoga Vasistha*, which is virtually unknown in the West due to the scarcity of its English translations, is also known by the names of *Maha-Ramayana*, *Uttar Ramayana*, *Arsha Ramayana*, *Jnana Vasistha*, *Vasistha Ramayana*, and *Vasistha*. But whatever you choose to call it, it is the earliest detailed work of Yoga-Vedanta and gives a magnificent exposition of the subtleties and insights of that philosophy with a majestic sweep that has never been equalled in any metaphysical work since.

Every kind of exposition is employed in its presentation—didactic instruction, answers to doubts, parables, and stories within stories. Here, for example, the interlocking system of stories within

stories enhances the vision of worlds within worlds, and of the infinitely complex world of the mind, itself arising from the Cosmic Mind. Many key points of this metaphysical instruction are touched upon over and over again with increasingly deeper meanings. Therefore the work appears to move in vast spirals, ultimately culminating in the Self-realization of Sri Rama.

In "Vairagya Prakarana" of Volume I it will be remembered that Sage Vasistha asked Sri Rama to express the reasons for his depressed state of mind. At this, Sri Rama elaborated upon the transiency and essencelessness of all objects of the world. All that he once thought to be of value and a source of happiness has, through the vision of his penetrative intellect, become nothing but a source of emptiness and misery.

In the first chapter, therefore, Sri Rama has taken what is normally the most valued aspects of life and has shown how illusory they are. The purpose here is to promote dispassion (*Vairagya*) in the aspirant. Such *Vairagya* considers all pleasures of the world, from the lowest form of life to the highest—that of *Brahma* the Creator—as insignificant and illusory. This is the first and fundamental requirement on the path of wisdom that leads to Self-realization.

In the second chapter, "Mumukshu Prakarana," it has been shown that certain qualifications are necessary for an aspirant before he can effectively move on the path towards the state of Immortality or Self-realization. Sage Vasistha, therefore, elaborat-

INTRODUCTION

ed on the four most important qualifications—those of Serenity, Contentment, Spiritual Enquiry and Good Association.

In addition, “Mumukshu Prakarana” elaborated on how the aspirant should not rely on destiny, rather on his own self-effort. The Self within is unlimited, and each person has that same potential within—all that is needed to unlock that infinite potential and creativity is repeated self-effort.

In the third chapter, “Utpatti Prakarana,” Sage Vasistha has shown how the world has evolved from and is sustained by the Absolute through the limitations of the mind. And since the world is merely a projection of the mind conditioned by ignorance, when ignorance is overcome by intuitive wisdom, mind rediscovers its unity with the Cosmic Mind and the individual merges into the Absolute. At this point, the entire world-process is remembered to be nothing but a long dream of the mind from which one has awoken.

The fourth chapter, “Sthiti Prakarana,” aims at steadying the knowledge of the Self. Giving insight into the amazing powers of the mind, Sage Vasistha explains that it is the impure mind that causes bondage, while it is the pure mind that gives Liberation. It is *Brahman* who has assumed the role of *Jiva* (an individual soul) due to the intensification of *Vasanas* (subtle desires). When freed of the *Vasanas*, the *Jiva* returns to its essential nature—*Brahman*. Just as with the dissolution of clouds the sun is fully revealed in the sky, so too, with the dissolution of *Vasanas* the knowledge of the Self becomes fully established in one’s heart.

In the fifth chapter, "Upashama Prakarana," Sage Vasistha deals with the topic of the quiescence of the mind. With the increasing insight into the falsity of the world-process, the subtle desires of an aspirant begin to dissolve. Consequently, his consciousness goes on expanding until he is fully established in Self-realization. It is *Vichar* or spiritual enquiry which enlightens his mind. *Vichar* can be practised by anyone whether he is a king like Janaka or an ascetic like Veethavya. Even demoniac personalities touched by the magic wand of *Vichar* may become transformed into enlightened Sages. In an eloquent style, abounding with stories and parables, Sage Vasistha gives a profound insight into the mystic art of *Vichar* which, having reached its maturity, blossoms into the intuitional realization of the Self.

In our second volume we covered "Utpatti Prakarana" (sections 66 to 122), the entire chapter of "Sthiti Prakarana" and a portion of "Upashama Prakarana" (sections 1 to 13). In the third volume we are covering the entire "Upashama Prakarana" from section 14 to section 93.

The sixth and the last chapter of Yoga Vasistha is "Nirvana Prakarana," which is further divided into two parts: "Purvardha" (first half) and "Uttarardha" (second half). This voluminous chapter deals with *Nirvana* or Liberation. Herein the teachings soar to the sublimest heights and Sri Rama, having attained Enlightenment, becomes free of all sorrows.



Sage Vasistha Imparts Spiritual Wisdom to Sri Rama

सर्वातीतपदालम्बी पूर्णेन्दुशिशिराशयः ।
नोद्वेगी न च तुष्टात्मा संसारे नाऽवसीदति ॥ ५ ॥

He who rests in the Bliss of the Transcendental Brahman, whose heart enjoys the coolness of the full moon, who is neither elated nor depressed in any condition presented by life, such a person does not suffer from the miseries of this world.

Upashama Prakarana: 18-5

Section 14—*The Means of Negating the Mind*

Sri Vasistha continued: O Rama, it is impossible to instruct the dull-witted. For he who refuses to open his eyes to a beautiful scene of nature, all words of instruction become ineffective. For he who is drunk with the intoxicating liquor of illusion and who is unable to keep his senses under control, spiritual instructions are futile.

Who would try to enlighten a dead body by telling it a thousand spiritual stories and parables? Who would play a beautiful tune on a flute to a buffalo, trying to convert him into a good musician? Instructing a person who refuses to be enlightened is of a similar nature. O Rama, he who does not endeavor to master his essentially dumb and blind mind (being a product of material *Prakriti*) is a dull-witted person.

When wisdom unfolds one realizes that the mind has always been conquered by the Self. Having no existence without the Self, it is an illusory reality arising out of ignorance. That which is described as *Jiva* (individual soul), as well as that mind through which the deluded is entangled in the world-process, are unreal.

How can there be anything other than the Self? If there is something other than the Self (Consciousness), then it is bound to be devoid of consciousness. But the idea that there is inert matter other than the Self is erroneous, because without consciousness, matter cannot be known to exist, and whatever cannot be known to exist, cannot exist. Therefore, the Self alone exists.*

Since there is nothing but the Self, nothing can cause misery. Yet due to ignorance, people are afflicted with various forms of sorrow and grief. Donkeys and the dull-witted have been born to suffer from self-created misery.

This world abounds with suffering. Led by ignorance and driven by sinful Karmas, numerous souls lead themselves to the embodiments of worms and insects daily, and are destroyed by the thousands daily. No one needs to grieve for them. Day by day thousands of animals are butchered. Numerous animals are killed in the forests by beasts that prey upon them. Even in the ocean small fishes are eaten by larger ones, and these in turn are killed by still larger aquatic creatures.

O Rama, behold how a little mosquito feeds upon a living particle, and in turn is eaten by a spider. The spider in turn is eaten by a frog, and the frog by a

*Anything, in order to be existent, must become a content of consciousness; and that which is devoid of consciousness cannot become a content of consciousness. Therefore, Vedanta maintains that the world of matter is an appearance only; it is non-existent in itself.

snake. Then the snake is killed by a mongoose, the mongoose by a cat, and the cat by a dog. The dog in turn is hunted down by a bear, the bear is overpowered and killed by a tiger, and the tiger is overcome and killed by a lion. Then even the lion is killed by the forces of nature, which are controlled by divinities. These divinities in turn are overcome by ignorance and enter into the world of embodiments. Thus, until Liberation is attained, the process of eating and of being eaten continues in an uninterrupted manner.

Therefore, O Rama, endeavor to negate the mind which in reality is non-existent. You are the knower of the Self, and, therefore, you know how the mind has come to exist due to various *Samkalpas* (thoughts and desires based upon ignorance). If these *Samkalpas* are negated, the mind is automatically negated. When you understand the illusoriness of all desires, the mind is bound to disperse like a cloud in the blue sky.

As long as you desire and depend upon the objects of the world, so long you will be dominated by the mind and will continue to experience bondage. But when you are able to renounce this world by negating the desires of the mind, you will become free from the mind and the bondage that it has created.

The sense of ego constitutes the inner world-process, while the sense of the reality in the objects constitute the external world-process. When *Aham* (the ego-sense) and *Idam* (the sense that objects are

real) are both negated, the mind is automatically mastered. O Rama, abide in the Self by renouncing the taster (the ego-sense) as well as the tasted (the objects of desire), and become immersed in the taste (*Rasa*—the blissful Self) alone.

In the same manner, by renouncing the knower (the ego-sense) and the knowable (objects of the world), abide in the mass of knowledge (consciousness) itself. Rising beyond the concepts of existence and non-existence, abide in *Brahman* wherein the world of waking, dream and deep sleep is negated. Breaking the fetters of the mind, release your spirit from bondage of the world-process in the same manner as a lion is released from an iron cage.

Led by ignorance, it is *Chit* (pure awareness) that becomes involved in objectivity. Tinged with objectivity, it assumes the form of *Chitta* (the mind). Deluded by the mind this pure awareness conceives of the erroneous notion, "I am different from the Self." Then the impressions of difference and duality in turn give rise to the intensification of the mind, which in turn results in the development of various afflictions and miseries. But when you gain an insight into the fact that the mind is nothing but the Self, and that you have never been separated from the Self, you will attain absolute mastery over the mind.

O Rama, your inner awareness of being one with the Self is veiled by the illusory mental projections of being an individual consisting of body, mind and senses. When these projections are negated through the negation of the *Chitta*, the Self alone remains.

The negation of the *Chitta* is conducive to increasing joy and bliss, while the intensification of the *Chitta* is the basis of all misery. When *Chitta* is negated, one attains Absolute Bliss.

Section 15—*Craving as the Source of All Evils*

Sri Vasistha continued: O Rama, having lost the awareness of its intrinsic identity with the Supreme Self, the soul in a human being follows the course of the deluded mind and believes in the illusion, "I am the body." Thus deluded, it becomes tainted by the impurities of the subtle desires (*Vasanas*) and of the impressions of attachment and hatred. These impurities lead directly to the growth of the creeper of craving which is the source of all evils.

Craving is like a dark night rumbling with fearsome clouds. It gives rise to great delusion and chills the heart by causing terror and shock. Great beings are willing to endure the fires of universal destruction, but they find craving to be intolerable and unbearable. All that is painful, sorrowful and terrible in this world has proceeded from craving.

Craving is like an insatiable wolf living in the cave of the mind, and in order to survive it consumes the flesh, blood and bones of every person from embodiment to embodiment. Like a shallow stream it reduces itself to a small pool of water, thereby creating the illusion that it is insignificant, but soon and without warning it swells into a mighty proportion bringing about vast forms of destruction.

Afflicted by craving, one feels humiliated. He becomes disheartened and the lustre of his face vanishes. He grieves, sighs, weeps and swims in the sea of sorrow. Craving, like a virulent serpent living in the hollow of the human heart, continues to envenom the person's *Pranas* (vital forces).

Blessed is the man who has not been consumed by the cankers of cravings. Blessed is he who has survived the dark and fearsome night of craving and has led himself to the auspicious light of the moon (the fructification of righteous Karmas).

This terrible stream of craving flows on in waves of grief and delusion. Ignorant souls are caught by delusion and are tossed by its waves. They are ever immersed in worrying about wealth, property and perishable objects of the world. Even the misery caused by the advancement of old age does not induce as much blindness and debility as the growth of craving in one's heart.

Tempted by the greenery of grass, deer are trapped by dark pits into which they fall. Much in the same way, tempted by the alluring promises of craving people fall into the dark pits of the world-process and there whirl through the cycles of birth and death for an indefinite period of time.

It is because of craving that the soul is caught in the world-process. It is the craving that blows as wind, stands immutable as mountains, and sustains all beings by the ropes of Karmas. This world-process of repeated embodiments is sustained by craving alone.

Arising out of ignorance, this ego-sense gives rise to the poisonous creeper of craving. When the illusory notion of differences (caused by the awareness of I, you, they, and the multiplicity of objects) is removed, this craving is destroyed, resulting in the Realization of the Self. Therefore, O Rama, do not entertain the ego-sense in your consciousness.

Section 16—*Two Aspected Renunciation of Vasana*

Sri Rama asked: O Sage, it is indeed difficult to renounce craving in the form of ego-consciousness. Since the ego-sense and the *Pranas* are interdependent, it seems to me that by renouncing ego one must renounce the physical life as well. Therefore, please explain the mystic art of renouncing the root of all cravings—the ego-sense.

Sage Vasistha explained: O Rama, the wise seers have enjoined two types of renunciation: that of *Jneya Vasana Tyaga* and that of *Dhyeya Vasana Tyaga*. *Dhyeya Vasana Tyaga* is practised during the disciplinary state of spiritual movement, while *Jneya Vasana Tyaga* is experienced when a person enters into *Samadhi* and becomes enlightened. In fact, *Dhyeya* is the means to *Jneya*.

A Yogi who has attained intuitional knowledge of the Self experiences the world as nothing but *Brahman*. Renunciation of the ego-sense on this basis is called *Jneya Vasana Tyaga* (renunciation of subtle desires consequent upon Self-realization).

Let me explain the nature of *Dhyeya Vasana Tyaga* (renunciation of subtle desires by adopting the practice of meditation and reflection). There are two types of ego: one which is dependent upon body, senses, mind and intellect, and thus is the sustainer of human relationships such as friend, wife, wealth and possessions, and the other which is the pure "I Am" sustaining the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep, and is the witness to the phenomenon of the repeated embodiments of the soul. In the *Dhyeya* form of renunciation, the former is negated while the latter is promoted.

A Yogi asserts within himself, "The body, mind, senses, and the realities of the world are sustained by me. I am one with them, and they are one with me. Without me they cannot exist." Then having negated the ego-sense that is related to the body and objects of the world, the Yogi meditates upon the pure "I Am" that sustains the three states, and wherein all names and forms are negated. Thus, the *Vasanas* of the heart are renounced even like the dispersal of clouds by the wind. This is *Dhyeya Vasana Tyaga* that leads to Liberation in life, and culminates in *Jneya Vasana Tyaga*.

He who is unaffected by pleasure and pain, who is not tossed by the currents of attachment and hatred, who is balanced in the desirable as well as undesirable conditions of life, such a Yogi has succeeded in the practice of *Dhyeya Vasana Tyaga*. He has become Liberated.

When a Yogi is not affected by provocative conditions that give rise to elation and grief, fear and anger, desire and frustration, then he becomes Liberated. Therefore, O Rama, practise *Dhyeya Vasana Tyaga* until you enter into the stream of *Jneya Vasana Tyaga*.

Section 17—*Affirmations That Promote Liberation*

Sage Vasistha continued: O Rama, those who attain disembodied Liberation cannot be described by words. Therefore, let me describe the exalted state of those who have attained Liberation in life.

When a Sage performs his daily duties without indulging in the pleasures of the senses and without being excited by the subtle desires of the mind, he is called a *Jivan Mukta*—one who is Liberated in life.

Craving that grows on the basis of the illusory notion that the world being real is the basis of involvement in the world-process, and due to its intensification one runs after the objects of the world with a sense of excitement. But when the mental-process is freed of this illusory notion of the reality of the world, it sustains the practical needs of life without causing bondage. Such a mental-process exists in a Liberated Sage.

Mentations that give rise to the surging waves of craving for the objects of the world create bondage, while the same that free one from all forms of dependence on the objects of the world promote

Liberation. O Rama, the subtle desires that arise in the heart, such as "May I attain this object," is called *Trishna* or craving and ramifies itself into various forms of illusion. But when this craving is utterly negated, and the heart does not go out after any object, whether imagined or real (from a practical point of view), then one is said to have attained Liberation in life.

Therefore, O Rama, renounce the desire for the variable conditions in life, abandon the desire for illusory pleasures, and bring about the negation of mind's flow towards the objects of the world. Thus doing you will abide in the Self, the boundless ocean of Bliss.

O Rama, the objects do not belong to you, nor do you belong to the objects. In fact, from a spiritual point of view these objects do not exist independent of your Self, nor do you exist separated from the illusory objects. The Self alone Is.

The following three types of affirmations promote the attainment of Liberation in life:

1. I am not this body. I am the subtle spirit beyond the objects, senses and body. I am subtler than the subtlest atoms.

2. I am the Imperishable Essence behind all names and forms. I am the substratum underlying the world of illusion. I alone exist manifesting through all names and forms, even as the ocean exists manifesting itself through numerous waves.

3. I (in the form of the ego-self) and this world are void of reality; we are like the vast sky devoid of clouds—nothing exists, nothing belongs to me.

The above three affirmations promote Liberation in life. However, there is yet another form of affirmation which is practised by the ignorant, and which must be renounced by the wise. It is the affirmation that "I am nothing but this body that has been produced by the parents." Renouncing this, one should practise the above three forms of affirmations in order to attain Liberation in life.

O Rama, abide in the knowledge that *Brahman* alone exists and that the world-process is an illusory superimposition on *Brahman* sustained by the limited mind. Just as different ornaments of gold are nothing but gold, and waves of the ocean are nothing but the ocean, in the same way all these objects of the world are nothing but *Brahman*. Abiding in this divine knowledge, perform your duties in daily life.

Just as roasted seeds cannot give rise to new plants, in the same way your daily activities devoid of the illusions of attachment and hatred will not produce bondage. Desire for the objects of the world blows like a mighty storm that compels the ignorant to fall into the blind pits of tribulations. But he who practises these spiritual affirmations does not fall into misery.

O Rama, assert within yourself that *Brahman* alone expresses as yourself, myself, and the multiple objects of the world. That *Brahman* is the Supreme

Essence, beginningless, the Light of all lights, deathless, unborn, indivisible, taintless, beyond the senses, the very life of life, the cause of all causes, self-effulgent, the ruler of all, the witness of all mental functions, the objects of *Vedic* instructions, the ultimate goal of life. May you discover yourself as *Brahman* and become free forever.

Section 18—*The Cessation of All Misery*

Sage Vasistha continued: Although a Liberated Sage continues to perform his duties in daily life, he remains detached from the ways of the world. Having realized the world to be unreal and the pleasures of the senses deceptive and illusory, he does not permit himself to be ruled by the Karmic process that gives rise to repeated embodiments.

There is pain in the beginning (birth), there is pain in the middle (youth), and there is pain in the end (old age and death). Thus knowing, a Sage abides in the Self wherein all *Vasanas* (subtle desires) are renounced; he is ever unagitated in all conditions.

His heart being illumined by the light of knowledge, he is the doer of good to all. Sporting in the gardens of wisdom, he shines like the full moon radiating peace and harmony in his surroundings. Such a Sage is established in the Self wherein there is the cessation of all misery.

A Sage is neither pleased nor displeased with anyone. Ever balanced in the midst of friend and foe, endowed with the divine qualities of compassion, generosity and humility, he performs his daily duties towards the good of all.

Neither elated by pleasant developments nor depressed by painful ones, ever balanced in mind, he rises beyond all forms of grief. When asked, he replies using minimum but precisely chosen words. At other times he remains absorbed in his inward silence. Having transcended love and hate, he is ever free from all forms of misery of the world.

Ever intent upon doing what is good to all, skillfully avoiding any form of tension or conflict in human relationships, a Sage knows the inner contents of the hearts of all beings. He dwells in this world unaffected by sorrow.

Abiding in the Supreme State of Consciousness, he looks at the ways of the world with amusement. Having mastered the mind, he can no longer be deluded by the cosmic illusion that overpowers all that are ignorant. But those who have not mastered their minds are ever sinking in the swamps of worldly enjoyments. The objects of the senses are like the fires of hell in which they are being ever consumed. Running after illusory possessions, they are ever caught in the torrential rains of misery proceeding from the dark clouds of Karmas.

Therefore, O Rama, although abiding in the desireless state of the Self, continue to perform your duties as if you are a person with desire. Though inwardly cool and contented, continue to act as though you are affected by the apparent realities of the world.

O Rama, the Self that dwells in you is ever unattached, all-pervading and Non-dual. How can there be bondage for the Self? When you realize the illusoriness of bondage, you will also understand the illusoriness of Liberation. When bondage itself is unreal, how can there be any problem in attaining Liberation?

O Rama, you are a detached witness. Therefore, renounce all the mental-processes that sustain the illusion of human relationships. You have no brother, sister, father, mother or other relatives. You are the Self: Non-dual, All-pervading, Immortal and Infinite.

O Rama, you should not be afflicted by sorrow when you are separated from dear relatives or when they depart from this world. Do not be affected by the pleasure and pain that are experienced by others. Do not be frightened by the non-existent world.

Even if you consider the Self subjected to real birth and death, you should not grieve at what is inevitable and unalterable. If you hold the view that even the Self within you is transient like the objects of the world, then you have no need to grieve, because the transient self is involved in transient relationships of the world.

O Rama, the fact is that you are the Self which is vast like the sky or as pure as smokeless fire. Just as there is no room for darkness in a blazing fire, in the same way there is no room for ignorance and its effects in the Self.

No one is one's friend and no one is one's enemy. It is the Divine Will that creates the illusion of friends and enemies, and those who are neither friends nor enemies. All souls that are driven by Karma continue to rise and fall like grains of rice in boiling water.

Men of contracted vision hold views like "This is my friend." "This is my dear relative." "This one is not my friend, but definitely my enemy." Such considerations and concepts are the results of a deluded vision. The wise, on the other hand, hold the vision, "All is the Self."

A Liberated Sage is established in the vision, "I am the Self. There is no object in which I am not present. There is no place where I am not. There is nothing which is not indwelt by me." Thus knowing, a Sage does not allow his intellect to be affected by the taints of illusion.

O Rama, all living beings are your relatives. Through the process of numerous embodiments, every soul has encountered numerous parents, friends, sisters and brothers. Therefore, with increasing insight into the nature of the Self, you must not entertain love or hate towards human relationships. Either entertain the thought that all beings are your brothers and sisters, or the thought that all beings are nothing but the Self.

Section 19—*The Story of Punya and Pavana*

Sri Vasistha continued: O Rama, with relation to the spiritual attitude that all living beings are one's relatives, I am reminded of the story of Punya and Pavana, which I will relate to you.

Once upon a time there lived a Sage called Dirghatapa in the Mahendra Mountains. He dwelt with his wife and his two sons, Punya and Pavana, in a most enchanting atmosphere of nature. As time passed, the elder son, Punya, attained Enlightenment. His brother Pavana, on the other hand, although he had turned away from the follies of the world, had not yet become established in *Brahman*. Therefore, he had not overcome the agitations of the mind.

In the course of time, Sage Dirghatapa, whose body was overcome with old age, adopted the Yogic art of leaving the body. Just as a bird leaves its nest, in the same way the Sage, who was established in wisdom, left his mortal body and became one with the Absolute. At the departure of her husband, his wife also adopted the Yogic technique of leaving the body behind. Even though her body was not subjected to age and disease, yet she, even as a black bee leaves a withering lotus, left her body and followed the course of her husband's spirit.

Because of his inward Enlightenment, their elder son Punya was unshaken by the death of his parents, but his younger brother Pavana, being yet

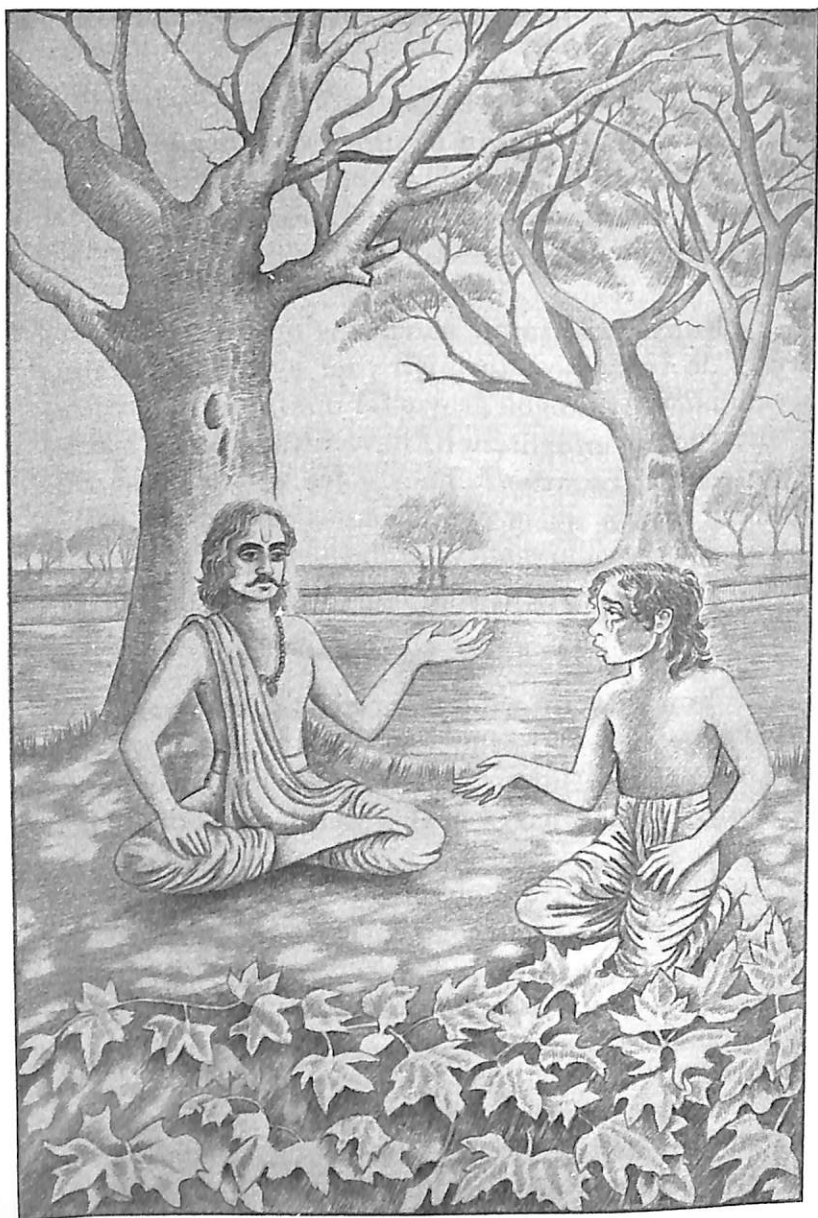
immature in wisdom, began to grieve over their loss. He was unable to find comfort or solace anywhere. Therefore, after performing the proper rituals for the death of the parents, Punya approached Pavana for the purpose of enlightening him.

Punya said to his sorrowing brother: O Pavana, why do tears flow through your eyes like rain from clouds? Why do you grieve for our father and mother who, being enlightened, have attained the highest state of Liberation? They have attained the Self which is the basis of all names and forms, rather which is the only reality behind all that exists. Why do you grieve for them who have become one with the Self?

You are suffering from mental afflictions. You have developed the illusion, "This is my mother. This is my father." But in fact, there is no mother or father, or any other relative in this world. All is the Self.

O Pavana, through repeated embodiments every soul acquires numerous fathers, mothers, sisters, brothers, wives, husbands, and other relatives. You have had thousand of fathers and mothers before. For whom should you grieve?

Like the waves in a river, you have had numerous children and grandchildren through countless embodiments. Just as a giant tree has produced abundant fruit every season, even so, in every birth you have had many sons, daughters, brothers, sisters and



Punya imparting spiritual wisdom to Pavana.

other relatives. Although with the passage of time you have become separated from them, yet you do not grieve for them. Then why have you developed so much hopeless grief at the loss of your present parents? If you do insist on grieving for them, then you should as well grieve for the thousands of parents that you had lost through your numerous past embodiments.

O Fortunate Soul, this world is an illusory projection of *Maya* (Cosmic Illusion). In fact, the Spirit has no parents, mothers, brothers, sisters or relatives. It is the Non-dual *Brahman*. Just as drops of water cannot stay on the burning sands of a desert, in the same way the misery of the world does not even touch *Brahman*.

All that you see in this world of today—the glory of the glorious, the wealth of the wealthy, the power of the ruling class—all these are passing dreams that exist only for a short time. Therefore, taking recourse to the inward vision of the Self, give up the veil of ignorance which is the cause of your sorrow.

Just as a patient suffering from delirium speaks of many things that have no reality, in the same way, the soul caught by the grip of ignorance continues to experience the illusions of meeting with a dear relative and parting from him. Knowing this world to be like a mirage, O Pavana, give up your sorrow.

**Section 20—*Punya Speaks of
The Many Embodiments of Pavana***

Punya said: O Pavana, it is the whirl-wind of illusion that gathers the transient world of human relationships. When the storm is over, all these illusions vanish. Therefore, who is the father, who is the mother, who is any relative in this world?

Led by the illusions of the mind one develops the notion that this is my friend, this is my dear relative, or this is my enemy. Led by the magical power of the mind, even poison becomes nectar and nectar becomes poison.

Therefore, do not let your mind sustain the notion that your relatives are real. Rather, understand that they are illusory expressions of ignorance. The reality in them as well as in yourself is the Absolute.

You are not this body consisting of flesh, blood and bones. Look at yourself and determine if there is anything in the body that could be the real Pavana.

Even the names of Punya and Pavana are mere convention adopted to sustain the practical realities of the world. They are also illusory concepts of the mind.

Driven by ignorance, O Pavana, once you were born as a deer in the forest. You sported with your

relatives who were also deer, but now you do not grieve for them.

In another embodiment you were a swan sporting in lakes and rivers abounding with lotuses. You delighted with your swan-relatives. But where are they now? And yet you do not grieve for them.

Once upon a time you became a lion and lived happily with your lion-relatives. But now they are all gone and you do not grieve for them.

Thus, O Pavana, you had been a fish, a prince, a crow, a dog, a *Brahmin*, a bird, a scorpion, a *Chandala* (outcaste) and many many types of beings, and now you are my brother.

I can also see many embodiments of my own self. I was once a parrot in the Trigarta country, a frog in a certain river, a bird in a forest, a camel in the Bindhya mountains, a King in the country of Paundra, and the same I am now your brother. I have thus passed through countless embodiments, but now I abide in wisdom.

O Pavana, you are in fact the birthless Self. You have no relatives. You are the only Reality. Therefore, enquire into the nature of the Self, discover your true identity as *Brahman*, and be free.

Section 21—*Liberation Consists of The Cessation of Cravings*

Sri Vasistha continued: O Rama, when Pavana listened to the teachings of Punya, he became free from grief. By meditating upon the nature of the Self he gradually attained enlightenment. Then both Punya and Pavana lived as enlightened Sages until the end of their days.

They were unaffected by pleasure and pain, gain and loss, and the varying conditions presented by their *Prarabdha* (fructifying) *Karmas*. With the termination of their *Prarabdha Karmas*, they became extinct in their physical bodies, even as a lamp becomes extinct with the exhaustion of its oil.

O Rama, since every soul has encountered numerous brothers, sisters and relatives, tell me, why should anybody grieve for any particular relationship? Whom should he accept among the thousands of his relatives, and whom should he reject?

Just as by adding fuel to fire it will grow with leaping tongues, in the same manner, by constantly thinking of objects, by entertaining desires for them, and by fondly coveting them, the fire of craving is led to a furious blaze. Cravings for the objects of the world are the source of all sorrows and miseries, and only through their renunciation can one attain spiritual bliss.

O Rama, be seated in the chariot of *Vasana Tyaga* (renunciation of subtle desires), and accompanied by discrimination (*Viveka*) and pure intellect (*Buddhi*), roam happily in this world.

He who has expelled from his unconscious the impressions of attachment towards all relatives, as well as renounced all external possessions, he will no longer be caught in the world-process. It is *Viveka* that will enable you to perform this spiritual feat.

O Rama, take recourse to *Vairagya* (dispassion), study of scriptures, and the cultivation of divine qualities. Leave no stone unturned in destroying the cravings of the heart, the source of all misery.

When the petty desires for the objects of the world are renounced, the mind is exalted to the unimaginable heights of spiritual glory. Even the joys of attaining the wealth of the three worlds, or of discovering a boundless treasure consisting of shining gems, are nothing compared to the Bliss that unfolds in the heart of a person due to the cessation of cravings.

When the mind is filled with bliss, the whole world seems to overflow with nectar, but when the mind is afflicted with sorrow, the whole world becomes enveloped by the dark fumes of poison.

If your feet are covered with soft leather shoes, no matter where you go, you find softness at every step. In the same manner, if your mind is enveloped in

the soft leather of spiritual vision, you will find auspiciousness, goodness, peace and bliss in every condition of your life.

Vairagya leads the mind to fullness, but increasing desires of the heart only bring about mental contraction. Just as when a river becomes scanty of water during winter, revealing its hidden ugliness in the form of mud, snakes, crocodiles and other creatures, in the same way, when the mind is led to its contraction by increasing desires, cravings and attachments, it becomes abundant with impurities such as anger, greed, pride, egoism, selfishness, violence and various forms of evil.

The *Chitta* (mind-stuff) of a Sage is like a forest abounding with trees laden with the fruits of virtue, wisdom, dispassion, serenity, self-restraint and other spiritual qualities. But the *Chitta* in a person who is unenlightened is like a desolate orchard that has been plundered by the restless monkeys of cravings.

For he who has no craving in his heart, the three worlds become as small as a lotus stalk. For him thousands of miles shrink into the space covered by a cow's foot and thousands of ages contract into a moment. The coolness of tranquility that is experienced by a Yogi who is desireless is not to be found even in the cooling light of the moon, nor in the serene caves of the Himalayas, nor even in the forest of redolent sandalwood trees. The beauty of the desireless mind far surpasses even the beauty of the full moon, or even the beauty of the milky ocean wherein Lord Vishnu abides.

When the tree of craving is cut down, there grows in its place the tree of auspiciousness with its ramifying branches of numerous divine qualities. As the desires of the mind dissolve, a Yogi develops *Vairagya*, attains mastery over the senses, and becomes endowed with immense endurance and patience. Adorned with numerous spiritual qualities, he attains Liberation.

Craving is like an inauspicious owl that forebodes misery in the form of poverty, disease, sickness and death. Therefore, do not allow this evil to enter the nest of your heart.

O Rama, the desires of the heart are the fetters that bind the soul. By understanding the illusoriness of objects and human relationships, free yourself from bondage and attain Liberation.

**Section 22—*King Bali's Dispassion
and His Recollection of the Teachings
He Received from His Father***

Sage Vasistha continued: O Rama, the Delight of Raghu's Race, hearken to this story of King Bali, which will enable you to attain wisdom and enlightenment. By the force of a sudden awakening of spiritual reflection, King Bali attained enlightenment. You too must attain the same.

Sri Rama said: O Sage, by your grace I have acquired supreme peace within my heart. The clouds of cravings have dispersed, leaving the firmament of my heart free of agitations. I experience within myself the fullness of bliss even like the full moon that floods the sky at night.

I am like the ocean of nectar surging with boundless joy. And yet, O Sage, I am never full or satisfied with your nectarine stories and teachings. Please relate to me, O Glorious Sage, the manner in which Bali, the King of Demons, came to acquire the transcendental truth.

Sage Vasistha said: O Rama, attend to this most enlightening story. By listening to it, you will attain the knowledge of the Self.

In this world-system, there is a plane of the nether-world, known as Patala. It is inhabited by multi-hooded serpents as well as by numerous demons and other beings. Once upon a time, King Bali, the illustrious son of King Virochana, became the monarch of the demons. By his might and valor he conquered even the gods and became the unobstructed monarch of the three worlds.

For countless years he continued to rule the gods, men, and demons, as well as all other beings. Thus he enjoyed a life abounding with all types of pleasures and riches. But as time elapsed like the course of a river rolling about a whirlpool, he witnessed the unending flux of generations of demons,

gods and numerous other beings. Gradually a spirit of distaste towards all enjoyments began to unfold within his heart.

Seated on the uppermost balcony of his many-storied palace one day, he gazed upon his empire and began to reflect thus within his mind: How long am I to continue to rule these worlds as an unobstructed monarch? What purpose is served by indulging in the pleasures of the senses again and again?

These sense-enjoyments are delightful only when the mind is overpowered by ignorance and lacks thoughtfulness. How can they yield an enduring form of joy to me?

Again and again one must wake up to a new day which is similar to yesterday; again and again there is a similar night, again and again must I take baths, eat food, sleep, indulge in the pleasures of the senses, and continue living a life of boring repetitions. Indeed it is shameful for the wise to indulge in the delights of the senses, which are like worthless toys in the hands of children.

Again and again the ignorant embrace their beloved ones, the same enjoyments of the senses, the same rotation of daily duties. Just as waves rise and fall in endless succession, so too, people continue to engage themselves in similar actions and enjoyments for no apparent purpose. It is shameful to indulge in the same enjoyments again and again, in spite of growing distaste for them.

What action must one perform so that there would remain nothing to be performed? What should a person do in order to be rid of the repetitive processes of this world? What should one attain so that nothing else remains to be attained?

I do not see any performance of action that could give rise to the immortal fruit of everlasting bliss. What is that bliss which is totally different from the illusory pleasures of the senses, the bliss that is eternal and everlasting?

Thus reflecting within his mind, King Bali entered into deep meditation. Then as the clouds of distraction began to subside, he suddenly recollected the profound spiritual teachings that he had received from his father, King Virochana.

(Sage Vasistha points out to the fact that good impressions that are acquired by the practice of Sat-sanga or good association, or by listening to the teachings of the enlightened Sages, can never be ineffective or void. They continue to abide in one's unconscious and are awakened when obstructive Karmas begin to disperse. When awakened, they beckon a person toward the attainment of Self-realization.)

As the breeze of recollection entered his mind, King Bali stretched his eyebrows and said to himself: Lo! Now I remember the teachings that I had received from my father—King Virochana. Seeing my father seated under a heavenly tree enjoying profound relaxation, I had asked him, "O Father, what is the

ultimate limit of this world wherein pain and pleasure cease to exist? What is that abode wherein the illusions of the mind subside, and all desires are fulfilled? Is there a resting place wherein one is freed of all sorrows and miseries of life?

“O Father, please explain to me whether or not it is possible for a person to experience a Bliss which brings about unending satisfaction in the heart. These enjoyments of the senses are illusory in nature; the happiness derived from them is fleeting like flashes of lightning and deceptive like mirages. What then is the nature of Supreme Bliss, if it is at all possible?”

I remember how my father replied to these questions by telling me the story of “The King and His minister.”

**Section 23—*The Story of the King
and His All-powerful Minister***

King Virochana said: O Son, there is a mystic country known as *Moksha*, or Liberation, which is so vast that many world-systems can be lost in it, even like little pebbles in the vast ocean. And yet, it is unique because there is neither rivers nor oceans, neither mountains nor forests, neither earth nor the sky, neither fire nor wind. In fact, this strange country is destitute of gods, demons, humans and other living beings, as well as of all objects of the world. Even time and space do not exist there, nor the great divinities

such as Vishnu, Brahma and Shiva. There abides only its most effulgent King, Who is all-pervading, omnipotent and the performer of all deeds.

This King willed to have a minister for himself, and consequently a Minister appeared. The Minister, then, owes his existence to the King, and without the King, this all-powerful Minister has no existence. It is only when the Minister is conquered that one may enter into the country of *Moksha*. However, that Minister cannot be conquered by all the martial methods adopted by us.

The King continues to abide in His own glory, but His Minister continues to perform numerous functions for the sake of the King.

Prince Bali then asked: O Father, what is that country which is bereft of all the ills of this world? How can I find it, and who is that Minister whom we have not yet conquered, in spite of our victory over the three worlds?

King Virochana replied: O Son, if all the gods and demons were to unite, and even if there were a force a million times greater than the force of all the gods and demons put together, yet it would be ineffective against that powerful Minister. That Minister is different from Indra, Kubera, and all other mighty gods over whom we demons have attained victory. Further, there is no weapon in the world that could be discharged against that all mighty Minister.

Just as an invulnerable rock cannot be pierced by lotus blooms, in the same way, that Minister cannot be overpowered by the mightiest weapons of war. The might of the greatest of heroes becomes nullified in the presence of that mighty Minister.

Though that Minister is not Vishnu, yet he is the real cause behind the destruction of the mightiest of demons. Just as the Wind of Destruction during the Cosmic Dissolution forces the planetary systems to drift into confusion like the leaves of a tree during a storm, in the same way, that Minister subjugates all the worlds and all the living beings that inhabit them.

O Prince, if anyone attains victory, it is because of the subtle power of the Minister that operates through him. In the same manner, if one is defeated, that too is because of the power of the Minister.

No one can vanquish the Minister except his creator, the King. With the passage of time, however, the King himself decides to recover his essential nature, and thus wills to overcome his Minister. Then this all-powerful Minister is overcome by the King effortlessly.

O Son, when that Minister is conquered by realizing the King (the Self), then even those who are apparently defeated attain supreme victory. And yet, if that Minister is not conquered, one remains defeated in spite of all his apparent victories in this transient world.

Therefore, O My Son, endeavor to attain mastery over that Minister (by realizing the King—the Self) in order to conquer death and experience the boundless bliss of freedom. Master that Minister who has dominated the three worlds, and become truly victorious (by realizing your unity with the Self).

Section 24—*The Means of Defeating the Minister*

Prince Bali asked: O Mighty Father, who is this Minister and how can one attain victory over him?

King Virochana replied: Ordinarily, O Child, this Minister is unvanquishable, but there is a method by which he can be controlled and subjugated. That method is adoption of reasoning. If you adopt right reasoning (spiritual enquiry into “Who Am I?”), this Minister can be easily conquered. Otherwise he will continue to inflict misery like a venomous snake.

You must find the King, and by doing so this Minister is automatically controlled. He who finds the King becomes the King himself, thereby becoming the absolute controller of the Minister.

O Son, the realization of the King depends upon the mastery over the Minister, and the mastery over the Minister depends upon the realization of the King. These two are interdependent. Therefore, you must endeavor towards both. This can be done by your persistent self-effort.

O Dear Prince, let me explain the true meaning behind this parable. The Country that I described is the state of Liberation (*Moksha*), which is the goal of every individual being. The Self, Who is the only reality behind all names and forms, is the King. Mind is the Minister of the King, and controls the world-process experienced by every soul. Every soul is essentially the King, but has forgotten its essential nature, and is therefore constantly tortured by the Minister. When the mind is conquered, all is conquered.

Desirelessness is the magical method of conquering the mind. Though it is a difficult art to develop desirelessness, yet it has to be developed in order to attain mastery over the mind.

What seems to be difficult becomes easy by repeated effort (*Abhyasa*). Therefore, O Son, practise repeated effort and conquer the mind. Repeated effort must also be joined with dispassion (*Vairagya*). Repeated effort and increasing dispassion are the two most important aspects of self-effort. There is nothing in the world that cannot be acquired by right self-effort. An aspirant should not surrender himself to a fictitious destiny which has no existence, but should take recourse to self-effort in order to master the mind and realize the Self.

O Son, by the exercise of dispassion and the repeated practice of spiritual enquiry, you will develop distaste for the enjoyments of the world. This distaste blooms like a lotus in your heart as you hasten your steps to Self-realization.

In the beginning, when the mind is immature, one should spend two parts of the day in attending to the needs of the body, one part to the service of his spiritual preceptor and the fourth part to the study of the scriptures. As the mind becomes increasingly integrated and purified, he should spend integrated and purified, he should spend only one part of the day in enjoyments of the body, two parts in the service of the preceptor, and the forth part in reflecting upon the scriptural teachings. When the mind is highly purified, he spends two parts of the day in reflecting upon the scriptural teachings and in developing *Vairagya*, and the other two parts in the service of his spiritual preceptor and in the practice of meditation.

Just as a white cloth can be easily colored when dipped into dye, in the same way, the purified mind is easily colored by the teachings of the scriptures.

Just as in preparing sweet preserve, the fruit is allowed to mellow by heat until the honey or sugar homogeneously permeates the fruit. In the same way, the mind must be treated with spiritual enquiry and meditation until the Bliss of *Brahman* permeates it thoroughly.

When the Self is thus glimpsed, one becomes desireless. When desirelessness grows, the vision of the Self grows to its fullness like the waxing moon.

All virtuous deeds in the form of performance of sacrifices, visiting pilgrimage centers, austerities of various types, acts of charity and so forth, give rise to the pleasures of the senses alone. But true bliss can

be experienced only when a person develops insight into the fact that happiness that is perceived in objects does not belong to the objects, but proceeds from the Self alone. Therefore, when the mind is dispassionate towards the objects, it reveals the fullness of Divine Bliss.

By turning away from the pleasures of the senses, one advances in spiritual enquiry. By spiritual enquiry one leads one's dispassion to its fullest bloom. Dispassion and spiritual enquiry are inter-dependent. Just as the ocean raises the clouds, and the clouds rain into the ocean, in the same way, dispassion and spiritual enquiry assist each other. And as dispassion and spiritual enquiry are led to maturity, one increasingly experiences the revelation of the Self.

O Son, renounce destiny at all costs. In this glorious project leave no stone unturned. Even if you have to grind your teeth and crumble your bones, you must continue to exercise your self-effort until the goal is reached.

Let a person acquire wealth by righteous means. Then instead of wasting his wealth in seeking the pleasures of the senses, he should utilize it in seeking the company of the wise and in acquiring the wisdom of the scriptures. Then led by spiritual enquiry and good association, he should develop distaste for the objects of the world. This will culminate in Self-realization wherein he will recollect his essential nature, much in the same way as a person remembers his lost ring on his own finger.

**Section 25—*The Rising Moon of Wisdom
in the Heart of King Bali***

Sage Vasistha continued: O Rama, thus did King Bali recollect the teachings that he had received from his father, King Virochana. Having recollected those instructions, he began to reflect within himself.

King Bali reflected thus: Lo! I have recollected the wisdom that was imparted to me by my illustrious father. I am on the way to Enlightenment. I have developed dispassion towards the objects of the world. It is indeed fortunate that I now behold the realms of peace and bliss.

How I have wandered through the world-process! Again and again I have amassed wealth, again and again I have enjoyed the pleasures of the senses, but now I have entered into the enchanting groves of spiritual peace. There is neither pleasure nor pain for me.

How vain is the pursuit of perishable wealth! Driven by ignorance I made my body dance like a puppet and have inflicted it with the fires of untold sufferings.

Now I have understood the vanity and emptiness that lies in pursuing the pleasures of the flesh. It is ignorance that forces one's mind to believe in the alluring beauty of the opposite sex. It is passion that projects an illusory notion of pleasure on the body that consists of flesh and blood. It is delusion that urges one to seek pleasure from the insentient objects of the world.

These pleasures of the senses are available in different forms throughout the world. There is nothing new to be gained through the repeated enjoyments of the sense-objects. Therefore, having renounced all the desires of the heart, I now abide in my very own Self.

Alas, led by delusion I pursued the goal of becoming an absolute monarch of the three worlds. In vain did I fight with gods for a long long time. Even the attainment of becoming an absolute monarch over the three worlds is nothing but a mental torment. Why should I now indulge in my past errors, which will not serve any purpose? Therefore, let me proceed towards the spiritual goal of becoming established in the Self. Let me seek the guidance of my spiritual preceptor—Sage Shukracharya.

Section 26—*Shukracharya Gives His Brief Message*

Sage Vasistha continued: O Rama, having reflected thus, King Bali invoked the presence of Sage Shukracharya—his spiritual preceptor. Thereupon Sage Shukracharya, being one with the Absolute Self, became aware of the aspiration of his disciple and appeared before King Bali.

King Bali told his spiritual preceptor of his growing dispassion towards all the enjoyments of the world and of his increasing aspiration for Self-realization. He asked Shukracharya for spiritual guidance.



Sage Shukracharya coursing through the sky.

Then Sage Shukracharya said: O King, I was on my way to the heavenly worlds to attend a divine mission. As long as there is the body, so long even the wise must perform duties in the world. However, let me impart to you the essence of spiritual wisdom.

This world is essentially Pure Consciousness. As the mind dissolves into Pure Consciousness, one experiences increasing bliss until, in the state of Self-realization, the experience of bliss becomes unlimited, unconditioned and eternal. Therefore, assert within yourself the fact of your essential nature. You are not this perishable body. You are the Self, the Reality behind the illusory names and forms of the world.

Led by ignorance the Self becomes identified with the projected illusions of the mind. This is the cause of bondage. But in reality, how can the all-pervading sky be attached to the passing clouds? Much in the same way, how can Pure Consciousness be trapped in the passing illusions of the mental thoughts?

O King, practise reflection and dive within the thought-waves of your mind. Discover the mystic fact that you are not the ego-self whirling with mental thought-waves, but you are the Absolute Self wherein the mind, along with its projections, are drowned and dissolved.

Develop an unceasing flow of spiritual affirmation, "I am not this body, but I am the Self." You are bound to attain Self-realization.

Thus saying, Sage Shukracharya vanished before King Bali and proceeded to the world of the gods.

**Section 27—*King Bali Practises Reflection
and Enters into Samadhi***

Sage Vasistha continued: O Rama, having listened to the brief message of Sage Shukracharya, who is honored equally by demons and gods, King Bali reflected within himself:

My Divine Preceptor has truly said that the three worlds are nothing but Pure Consciousness. I am of the essence of Pure Consciousness. The objects are Pure Consciousness. The activities of the world are Pure Consciousness. Pure Consciousness permeates all that exists in this world.

Illumined by the ever-risen sun of Pure Consciousness, objects maintain their properties—water wets, fire burns, wind blows, and every object maintains its existence.

The senses, body, mind, the desires of the mind—all these are nothing but Pure Consciousness. Internally and externally all this is permeated by Pure Consciousness.

All enjoyments occur like waves in the ocean of Pure Consciousness. They do not take place in the body. This material body cannot be the knower or the enjoyer of the world-process.

This body, which exists like a rock or clod of earth, has nothing to do with Me, who am Pure Consciousness. I am Pure Consciousness behind the

vast sky. I am the shining Self behind the luminous moon. I am the Self behind all beings whether gods, or demons, or human beings, or others.

It is Pure Consciousness which, being refracted by the limited mind, expresses Itself in the sentiments of love and hatred. Distorted by the mind, it is Pure Consciousness which is perceived as existence as well as non-existence, thingness in objects as well as nothingness in them.

How can there be hatred and attachment in Me when even the mind and its thought-waves do not exist in Me? I am the all-pervading Self which is ever blissful, non-dual, and devoid of all the projections of the mind.

Adorations to the Self, the essential nature of myself, the innermost essence of all that exists, which is to be realized by spiritual enquiry. I am verily that blissful *Brahman* who has pervaded this entire universe.

I am vaster than the ether, minuter than the minutest atom. How can the world-process consisting of pleasure and pain ever affect Me?

Just as a person who loses wealth by his right hand but gains the same by his left does not become affected by the feeling of gain or loss, in the same manner, there is no gain or loss for Me, who am the Self that underlies all names and forms.

I was ever the true Subject behind all the activities of this world. The same am I now and forever, because I am *Brahman*. Nothing new or different from *Brahman* has ever existed or will ever exist. Let me therefore abide in my essential nature—*Brahman*, the Absolute Self.

Thus having reflected upon the nature of the Self, King Bali meditated upon *Brahman* with the help of *Om*, and having transcended the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep, he passed into the state of *Turiya*, the fourth or the transcendental state. As a result of this, King Bali became immersed in *Samadhi* (superconsciousness) wherein he was no longer caught in the maze of the mind, no longer dependent upon the world of time and space, no longer conditioned by the triad of seer, seen and sight. He transcended even the ego-thought and became like a painted picture, or like a flame that burns steadily in a windless place.

Section 28—Sage Shukracharya Consoles the Demons

Sri Vasistha continued: O Rama, seeing that King Bali had lingered long, the attendants of the King became concerned. They hastily ascended to the uppermost story of the palace. Among them were the generals of the demon army, as well as Gods such as Kuvera, Yama and Indra who wanted to pay their tributes to the King.

Even the celestial nymphs as well as the damsels of the court joined the train. Having approached Bali who was seated like a painted picture, the attendants of the King bowed their heads in reverence, and, seeing him in a state of statue-like stillness, they were overcome with amazement and grief. Then in order to seek, guidance they invoked the presence of their preceptor Sage Shukracharya, who, being the all-pervasive *Atman*, appeared before them.

Being honored by the demons and gods, Sage Shukracharya, seated on a sofa, observed the divine state of King Bali. With his countenance lit up with smile, he said to all those who were there, "As a result of his spiritual enquiry, the King has passed into the blessed state of *Samadhi* (superconsciousness). The mist of ignorance has dissolved from the firmament of his heart, and he has been awakened from the long dream of the world-process. Bereft of the burdens of the world, he is enjoying supreme tranquility and rest.

"Therefore, O Ye Attendants of the King, please do not try to awaken him from this blessed state. He will himself wake up from this state in the course of time. In the mean time, attend to the management of the kingdom by performing your respective duties which have been already assigned to you by the King."

Having heard the words of the Sage, the attendants continued with their duties, and the gods and other beings went to their respective abodes.

Section 29—*Bali Attains Liberation in Life*

Sage Vasistha continued: O Rama, King Bali continued to be immersed in *Samadhi* for one thousand celestial years, after which he was awakened to normal consciousness by the beating of heavenly drums by the gods. His city, which had become like a withering lotus in his absence, now bloomed with delight much as the lotus does with the rising of the sun.

Having recovered normal consciousness, King Bali reflected thus: O how wonderful is this state of Bliss which I have enjoyed. Immersed in Bliss, I passed through such a long duration of time as if it were only a moment. Let me again enter into this same state of superconsciousness—what have I to do with the transient prosperities of the world?

Even the nectarine moon does not give as much delight to the surging ocean as does the Bliss of *Samadhi* to my mind. I am enjoying boundless Bliss and am immersed in Supreme Peace.

I have no need to desire for Liberation, because I have discovered the fact that bondage is illusory. Where there is no bondage, how can there be Liberation? Bondage and Liberation are for the ignorant alone. I am illumined by knowledge. The veil of ignorance that obstructed the vision of my essential Self has been torn asunder.

Now neither do I desire for meditation, nor do I desire for the absence of meditation. I neither desire for the enjoyments of the world, nor do I desire for

abandoning them. I abide in the Self wherein my vision is ever balanced in all conditions.

Though detached from the body, I am not dead. Yet being detached from the vital forces, I cannot be said to be alive. I am neither dead nor alive, neither gross nor subtle, neither existent nor non-existent. This body, as well as all the objects of the world, do not belong to me. The bodies of others as well as those of different worlds do not belong to me. I am the innermost Self. Adorations unto my very Self!

Thus having reflected deeply upon the illusory nature of the world, Bali no longer found the need of rejecting the world or of being immersed in *Samadhi*. Therefore, having renounced the subtle desires of the mind, he continued to rule his kingdom in the most elegant manner possible. And under his rule the kingdom became increasingly prosperous.

In the course of time, the gods became concerned with the increasing glory of King Bali and of his demoniac race. They therefore approached Lord Vishnu for help. Lord Vishnu then devised a plan to please the gods as well as to bestow His boundless grace on King Bali.

O Rama, the resulting *Puranic* story is well known. One time King Bali performed a great sacrifice in which the gods, sages and all enlightened beings were present. In this sacrifice, Lord Vishnu incarnated in the form of a dwarfish *Brahmin*, who approached King Bali and asked for a piece of land

that could be measured by three of his steps. King Bali, thinking that three steps of a dwarf would be absurdly small, granted the boon. The *Brahmin*, who was none other than Lord Vishnu, then assumed a cosmic form and measured the three worlds by his three steps, thus reducing Bali to a state in which he possessed nothing at all.

This act of Lord Vishnu delighted the gods. In turn, King Bali, to whom the three worlds were nothing but expressions of illusion, was not in the least affected by losing his vast empire. Rather, he was immensely delighted to have been graced by Lord Vishnu. Then led by Lord Vishnu's will, he chose to abide in *Patala* (the netherworld) for a long time.

O Rama, King Bali abides in *Patala* even to this very day. After a long period of time he will rise to Indrahood, for such is the operation of his *Prarabdha Karma* (fructifying Karma of the past). However, being enlightened, for him it is all the same whether he remains in *Patala* or whether he rises to Indrahood and becomes the King of the celestials, or whether he sheds his body and becomes immersed in the state of disembodied Liberation.

O Rama, know the glory of Self-realization, before which even the attainment of the three worlds as well as their loss cannot agitate the heart of one who is realized. Therefore, may you practise reflection the same way as King Bali did and become established in your essential nature, the Non-dual Self.

O Rama, you shine like the sun illumining all names and forms of the world. You are Pure Consciousness. No one is your relative, your friend or foe. You alone exist. Therefore, how can there be the perception of multiplicity within your homogeneous Self?

O Rama, you are the Cosmic Being. You are the transcendental *Atman*. All worlds are sustained by your Self in the same manner as all beads in a rosary are sustained by the thread. There is neither birth nor death for you.

When cravings increase, the disease of the world-process is intensified. When cravings are gradually destroyed, the disease of the world-process begins to wane. Therefore, renounce all cravings of the mind and remain a detached witness to all the functions of the mind and senses.

O Child, do not grieve in vain. You are untouched by pleasure and pain. You are the Pure Self that illumines all objects of the world.

That which is pleasant to the mind is the source of misery, while that which is unpleasant to the mind in the form of austerity, control of senses, and the practice of various Yogic disciplines, is the source of joy. Therefore, do not incline your mind to the objects of its delight, but lead it through the apparently distasteful spiritual process until the ascending heights of wisdom are attained.

Renounce the deluded notion, "This is delightful for me. That is not delightful for me. This is desirable, but that is not desirable. This I love but that I hate." When you rise beyond love and hate, you will enjoy the immutable vision of equanimity at all times.

Wherever your mind goes impelled by its distraction, from there bring it back again and again to the Self that abides in the heart. Just as an elephant is trained with skill and patience, so also you should train and tame this elephant of a mind.

Do not be like the ignorant who consider the body as their only reality. They are driven by mental desires to enjoy the objects of the world. But they are only puppets of the senses and are subject to repeated births and deaths.

There is nothing more painful in this world than the teachings of the ignorant which deprive one of *Viveka* (discrimination), *Vairagya* (dispassion) and other luminous virtues. O Mighty Rama, drive away the cloud of illusion from your heart by creating the storm of discriminative vision and abide in the Self.

As long as a sustained self-effort in the form of listening to the teachings of the scriptures and reflecting upon them is not adopted, so long spiritual enquiry will not dawn in the mind. When spiritual enquiry does dawn, however, one is led to the recovery of his essential identity with the Absolute Self.

Therefore, O Rama, pursue the path of wisdom. Practise listening, reflection and enquiry. Cultivate the qualities of discrimination, dispassion and spiritual aspiration. Having cultivated them, protect them from the distractions caused by dullness, procrastination and other defects of the mind. Enjoy the nectar of *Samadhi*, and ascend the rungs of spiritual wisdom. Continue ascending until the seventh rung of *Turiya* (the transcendental) is realized. Thus proceed on the luminous path of increasing joy until you are immersed in the Supreme Bliss of the Self.

Section 30–31—*The Rise of Demon Hiranyakashipu, His Destruction, and His Son Prahlad's Devotion*

Sri Vasistha continued: O Rama, listen to an effective method of attaining spiritual wisdom. It is a method of devotion which removes all obstacles on the path leading to spiritual Enlightenment, and was the method adopted by Prahlad, son of the demon-king Hiranyakashipu.

One time in *Patala* (the netherworld) there arose a mighty demon known as Hiranyakashipu. By his immense valor he defeated the gods and rival demons, and having ousted Indra from his celestial throne, became the unobstructed monarch of the three worlds. As time passed he was endowed with many sons, and among them was Prahlad, who later became a famous devotee of Lord Vishnu.

Hiranyakashipu tormented the gods, sages and saints to an extreme degree. His increasing oppression became so unbearable to the gods that they approached Lord Brahma asking for help. At the request of Brahma, Lord Vishnu incarnated as Narasimha, a terrible form of half human and half lion. This mighty incarnation had a face of a lion with teeth shining like lightning bolts and blazing claws of destruction. His entire body was effulgent and every movement seemed to shatter the firmaments.

With the advent of Lord Narasimha, the city of the demons was burnt to ashes and Hiranyakashipu was destroyed in a terrible battle. Prahlad, the wisest son of Hiranyakashipu, then ascended the throne of the Kingdom.

Having witnessed the might of Lord Vishnu, Prahlad was dumbfounded at His terrible form and reflected thus: Just as a mighty monkey shakes down the best fruits that grow on a tree, even so this mighty Lord Hari repeatedly destroys the best of demons. Whose support should I seek? Who is there to give me refuge? There is no one mightier than Lord Vishnu.

Let me therefore take refuge in Lord Vishnu. He is the creator, sustainer and destroyer of the universe. There is no one equal to Him in this world. It is ridiculous to fight Him who is almighty.

Let me therefore take recourse to *Japa* of the Divine *Mantra*, "*Om Namo Narayanaya*" and meditate upon Lord Vishnu. Let me meditate upon the fact that Lord Vishnu is all this.

Lord Vishnu is the directions; He is the sky; He is the earth; He is all that exists. He is the spirit in me. I am essentially Lord Vishnu.

It is by identifying myself with Lord Vishnu that I can offer the best form of worship to Him. Therefore, let me follow the mental affirmation that I am Lord Vishnu.

Lo! I am the all-pervading Self. I am seated on the Garuda bird that shines with golden lustre. My arms are adorned with celestial ornaments, and my hands hold the four divine articles of mace, discus, lotus and conch. Goddess Lakshmi, the Goddess presiding over prosperity and victory, abides with Me as My eternal consort.

The *Maya* of Lord Vishnu that creates all the worlds is under My control, because I am Lord Vishnu. Brahma, the Creator, arose out of My navel. I am the Sustainer of all created worlds.

The earth is My feet, the sky My head, the three worlds My body. I am verily Lord Vishnu, the Destroyer of the forces of darkness. There is no one in the three worlds who can stand against Me.

Brahma, Indra, the Fire God, Shiva and all other divinities offer adorations to Me. My glory is boundless like the ocean. I am the dispeller of grief and fear from the hearts of My devotees.

**Section 32—King Prahlad Performs Worship
of Lord Vishnu**

Sri Vasistha continued: O Rama, having reflected thus within his mind, King Prahlad proceeded with the mental worship of Lord Vishnu. He invoked the Divine Presence of Lord Vishnu within his heart, and adopting the method of *Ahamgraha Upasana* (meditating upon the object of meditation by identifying oneself with it), he reflected in the following manner:

I am Lord Vishnu and nothing else. I am seated on Garuda who is endowed with the four divine attributes of will, intelligence, action and compassion, who has four arms and who is holding the four divine objects of conch, discus, mace and lotus.

I am the Supremely Blessed Vishnu with blue complexion, with eyes shining like the sun and moon, and with his divine weapons, and I am surrounded by His divine attendants.

I worship this Divine Image that abides in my heart with offerings of flowers by the act of mind alone. I offer unto the Divine Self all kinds of precious gems and jewels and all articles of taste and enjoyment.

By the act of his mind, King Prahlad offered unto Lord Vishnu wreaths of mandara flowers, chains of lotuses made of gold, as well as garlands of fragrant and beautiful flowers such as kunda, kasha, kinsuka, asoka and bela.



Lord Vishnu appearing before King Prahlad.

He offered flowers as well as fruit from numerous trees, and performed an elaborate worship of Lord Vishnu by collecting the most wonderful articles of worship by the act of mind alone.

After performing the mental worship of Lord Vishnu, King Prahlad conducted an external worship. In the inner apartments of his palace, in the divine temple, he performed the external worship of Lord Vishnu by using all the materials.*

Day by day King Prahlad performed internal as well as external worship of Lord Vishnu. As a result of his sacred worship, his mind became purified. In turn, his subjects who were constantly under his influence became righteous and religious in nature.

When the gods of the heavenly world came to know of Prahlad's transformation and that of his subjects, and that they had become devotees of Lord

*The ritual worship according to the Hindus is performed with the use of 16 materials called *Upacharas*. In mental worship these materials are imagined by the mind, while in external worship they are used in their real forms. The sixteen articles are:

1. *Asana* (offering a seat for the image of God),
2. *Swagata* (welcoming the Divinity),
3. *Padya* (offering water for washing His feet,
4. *Arghya* (offering water in a vessel presented before the Deity),
5. *Achamana* (allowing the Divinity to sip the water),
6. *Madhuparka* (a preparation of honey, clarified butter, milk and curd or yogurt),
7. *Snanam* (offering water for bathing the Deity),
8. *Vastra* (offering of a garment),
9. *Abhushana* (offering of jewels and adornments),
10. *Gandha* (offering of perfumes),
11. *Pushpa* (offering of flowers),
12. *Dhupa* (offering of incense),
13. *Dipa* (offering of light),
14. *Naivedya* (offering of food),
15. *Tambulam* (offering of betel leaves for making the mouth fragrant), and
16. *Vandana* (bowing down with the spirit of surrender as well as prayer).

Vishnu and had given up their demoniac ways, they approached Lord Vishnu to find out the truth of the matter.

The gods asked of Lord Vishnu: O Supreme Divinity, how is it that the demons have become your devotees. These demons were ever intent on hurting the sages and saints, and were always committing increasing acts of violence and cruelty. How is it that they have turned to devotion, the rarest attainment in life?

Section 33—*The Unfoldment of Divine Virtues in Prahlad and the Grace of Lord Vishnu*

Like the rumbling of a cloud, Lord Vishnu spoke in a deep mystic voice: O Gods, Prahlad has become My devotee. This should not be distressing to you. If you think that endowed with My devotion these mighty demons will become mightier still, it is not so. Devotion to Me is the source of all auspiciousness. It promotes harmony and absence of violence.

King Prahlad has attained that lofty state wherein all his Karmas have been burnt up by the fire of devotion. He will never enter into a mother's womb again. If a person who is endowed with good qualities suddenly turns into an evil personality with evil habits, this is indeed a matter of great concern. But when a demoniac personality turns into a divine personality, this is indeed a matter for great rejoicing. Therefore, O gods, there is no need for you to fear Prahlad and his people.

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Sage Vasistha continued: Thus saying, Lord Vishnu disappeared from their sight and the gods returned to their various abodes. O Rama, since then the gods and demons became friends.

It is rightly said that when a person conducts himself in such a manner that he does not cause agitation in the hearts of others, then all beings place their trust in him. He is loved by all. Such was the case with King Prahlad who had attained mental purification by the practice of devotion.

O Rama, as time passed, all divine qualities such as discrimination, cheerfulness, dispassion and contentment bloomed in his personality. He was no longer interested in the pleasures of the senses, and he shunned them in the same manner as a deer shuns the company of human beings.

His mind sought delight only in the scriptures. The talks and ways of the world lost their meaning for him. He was no longer interested in the assembly of men and women or in exuberant festivities.

But as yet, King Prahlad had not become established in the Self. Like a pendulum his mind moved between two states: on one side physical consciousness with an ever increasing awareness of the emptiness of all worldly enjoyments, and on the other side, the mystic consciousness that beckoned him towards the attainment of Liberation.

For the purpose of showering His Grace on his devotee Prahlad, Lord Vishnu appeared before him. Overjoyed, Prahlad spoke words of praise steeped in divine love. King Prahlad said: I adore Thee, O Beloved Lord Hari. You are the Light of lights dispelling the darkness that abides internally as well as externally. You are the refuge of the suppliant, the all-powerful Divinity. You manifest in the triple forms of Vishnu, Brahma and Shiva.

I take refuge in Thee! You have the complexion of a blue lotus and the hue of the autumnal sky. You hold lotus, discus, mace and conch in your hands.

I worship Thee in the lotus of my heart. You are effulgent. Your smiles are like the beams of the moon delightful for allaying the sufferings of all devotees. You are adorned with divine ornaments.

I take refuge in Thee! You are ever associated with Lakshmi, the Goddess of Prosperity. You are the Cosmic Being who contains within Himself this entire universe and who is ever untouched by the world-process. You are the unborn, immortal, immutable, Non-dual Self.

I have surrendered unto Thee! You are the giver of Liberation and the remover of all sufferings. You are Existence, Knowledge and Bliss Absolute. You are the Light that dispels the darkness of ignorance.

Section 34—Prahlaḍ Attains Enlightenment

Sri Vasistha said: Thus did King Prahlaḍ offer words of praise to Lord Viṣṇu with a heart overflowing with devotion.

At this, Lord Viṣṇu said: O Jewel among the demon-race, I am indeed pleased with your devotion. Choose any boon and it will be given to you.

Prahlaḍ responded: O Lord, you are the giver of all desires. You are the indweller in the hearts of all; nothing is hidden from You. Therefore, grant me that which is best for me.

Lord Viṣṇu said: O Sinless Prahlaḍ, may you continue to maintain the process of spiritual enquiry until you are established in the Self. May you attain Liberation wherein all the doubts and distractions of the mind cease.

Thus saying, Lord Viṣṇu disappeared and King Prahlaḍ, seated in a meditative pose, reflected within himself: I am not this mortal personality. I am the Self underlying all names and forms. I am the interpenetrating Reality, the very embodiment of Pure Existence. I am self-effulgent, pure, indivisible and eternal.

Just as a lamp illumines the objects of the world during the night, in the same way it is the Light of *Brahman* that renders every object perceptible in the

dark night of the world-process. It is the Self that has given heat to the sun, coolness to the moon, solidity to the mountains and liquidity to the waters.

Just as a mirror supports all reflections, in the same way *Brahman* sustains the world-process in the form of the experiences of numerous souls as they wander through the dark night of ignorance. Just as the reflection of the sun undergoes modifications while the sun is ever unaffected, in the same manner *Brahman* is ever unaffected while changes continue in the world of matter.

I am of the nature of pure awareness that abides in every living being. Therefore, all eyes of all living beings are my eyes, all ears are my ears, all bodies are my bodies, all arms are my arms, and all feet are my feet. Becoming the sun I roam through the vast sky, while becoming the wind I race through fields and forests.

My Being as Lord Vishnu is the sublimest of all names and forms. I am indeed Lord Vishnu possessing conch, mace, discus and lotus. I am the highest summit of all fortune and prosperity. I am the originator of Brahma, the Creator. I am the three-eyed Shiva, the consort of Goddess Parvati, who, much as a tortoise withdraws its limbs, withdraws the three worlds during *Pralaya* (cosmic destruction).

I am Indra, the ruler of the heavenly worlds. I am all the gods. I am woman; I am man; I am young and old; I am the Cosmic Being with faces everywhere.

Just as a child molds a clod of earth into different shapes and destroys them just for fun, in the same way I am the Self that molds matter into different forms. This entire creation arising out of *Maya* is My sport. I am the Cause of this universe. Sustained by Me this universe exists, and when the Self is realized, this universe ceases to exist.

I am the fragrance in the flowers, the beauty in their petals. I am beauty in the beautiful and the underlying reality behind all names and forms.

Just as the water element expresses itself in the form of the oceans, lakes, rivers, and various streams, and also as sap that ascends and sustains every leaf and branch of the trees, so too I am the Essence that permeates the entire universe. Just as butter is homogeneously distributed throughout milk, so too I am the permeating Essence in this world-process.

I am the Eternal Essence behind the past, present and future. Without battling the gods, I have become the God of gods. I have become the unobstructed monarch over the entire creation, because I am the Non-dual Self.

Fullness flows over fullness. Just as it is impossible for the ocean to remain within its bounds during the storm of destruction, in the same manner, whipped by the storm of intuitive vision, I am unable to keep Myself within any bounds.

It is a wonder how this illusion of the body arose within Me! Whence did the perception of duality arise in Me who am like the limitless sky? Where are the differences caused by I, you, he, she, they and other multiplicities? Who is subject to birth and death? Who are the dear relatives and friends? The Self alone is, therefore, how can all these illusions exist?

Now I possess the majestic vision of *Brahman*. What a difference! Previously the little I in me was caught in the dungeon of the world-process abounding with the hissing snakes of desires, but now I am the Ruler of all rulers—I am the Reality which is vast like the sky.

Lo! I have devoured the world and assimilated it. All miseries have terminated. I have attained the highest. I have become truly successful. How am I to delight in the transient glories of the world?

Fie on those who seek refuge in the objects of the world. They are like worms that dwell in the forests, rivers, and hills. Driven by desire they have become miserable.

The dull-witted alone would renounce this glorious state of Liberation for the sake of the limited pleasures of the world. They are like camels who turn away from tender flowers to feed on thorny bushes.

Having tasted the sweetness of Divine Bliss, the pleasures of the world have become bitter and essenceless. Who will abandon the sweet essence of

the sugarcane and run after the bitter juice of maragassa leaves? Who will turn away from the heavenly gardens and revel in the burning sands of a desert? Who will renounce the vision of the all-pervading Self and become confined to the limited mortal body?

Why don't people seek the Self instead of running after the perishable glories of the world? Even having attained the Kingdom of the three worlds, in reality nothing is gained.

It is the power of the Self that expresses as luminosity among the luminous objects, as nectar in the moon, as omniscience in Lord Shiva, as victory in Lord Vishnu, as the various powers in various gods, as speed in the mind, and as the characteristic qualities behind all elements and their effects.

I am the power of austerity in the ascetics, of movement in the divine vehicles, of immutability among the mountains, and of profundity among the oceans.

I am the Void of the nihilists, as well as *Brahman* of the Vedantins. I am the vastness of the sky, the beauty of spring, the heat of summer, the rumbling of rain clouds; in fact, I am the essence of all that exists.

Those who have not attained the intuitive vision of the Self are like birds trapped in the net of a fowler. They are in the state of bondage that they themselves created by their own desires and Karmic entangle-

ments. Driven by attachment and hatred, deluded by the pairs of opposites, individual souls degrade themselves into lower states likened to worms and insects.

He indeed is successful in life who has seen the termination of the blazing fires of duality. He has experienced the ceaseless rains of true vision that pour down from the clouds of Divine Wisdom. His mind, glowing like the full moon, sends forth the cooling rays of divine thoughts.

O God of gods, the Self that abides in me, adorations to Thee! You have been attained after many years of turmoil. I have attained You by a sustained practice of enquiry and meditation. Adorations to Thee, again and again!

**Section 35—*Reflections and Experiences
of King Prahlad***

King Prahlad said to himself: All this is nothing but the *Om* of the *Upanishads*. When the names and forms are negated by the force of spiritual insight, *Brahman* alone remains as the only Reality.

This Absolute Self is not confined to the body consisting of bones, flesh, blood and fat, but is beyond the body. It abides in the sun and thus illumines the world. It is the interpenetrating essence.

It is the Self that gives the quality of burning to fire, of wetting to liquid, and the respective qualities to all elements and objects. It is the Supreme Enjoyer seated in the cave of the heart.

Though ever actionless, the Self is the basis of all activities. Assuming the form of Time, it encompasses all objects. It drives the sun and wind to perform their respective functions. Like a potter's wheel which does not go anywhere but yet continues to mold various pots, in the same manner, though unmoving, the Self continues to mold all objects into different names and forms. And yet, the Self is ever untouched and untainted by the world-process.

Though having maintained the illusory experiences of past embodiments, present predicaments and future possibilities, this Self is timeless and immutable. Though apparently having experienced numerous conditions of pleasure and pain, this Self is ever blissful.

This *Atman*, fearless in its nature, assumes the numerous forms of objects in this world and becomes the cause of worldly experiences comprised of pleasure and pain. Swifter than the wind, steadier than the mountains, purer than the vast sky, this Self is the essence of all that exists.

This *Atman* alone is to be sought. This *Atman* alone is to be praised. This *Atman* alone is to be meditated upon. When this *Atman* is discovered, one

crosses the ocean of the world-process and attains the Supreme Abode of Immortality.

This Self is like the black bee, the taster of honey in the lotus of the heart of every being. Therefore, it can be easily realized. The realization of the Self is similar to recovering a friend in a stranger by the force of mere recollection. *(A person travelling with a stranger gradually discovers that the stranger is no other than his boyhood friend. By the force of mere recollection, he has found a friend who has been, as it were, lost for a long time. Such is also the case with the Self.)*

If a friend were at a distance, there might be the necessity of calling out to him. But the Friend in the form of the Self is the indwelling reality. Therefore, all that is needed in attracting the attention of the Friend is the chanting of *Om* conjoined with spiritual reflection.

When men of the world are served by others, they become proud and conceited, but such is not the case with this Supreme Self. Although served by one and all, the Self is ever untouched by pride or conceit.

Like fragrance in flowers, oil in sesame seeds, and sweetness in fruits, the Self abides in all. Though ever abiding in the heart, the Self is not known due to ignorance, but is discovered through wisdom. When discovered, even like the discovery of a lost friend, the Self becomes the source of great joy. The vision of the Self puts an end to the evils of the world-process.

When the Self is realized, all the fetters of Karmas and desires are broken, all the enemies in the form of egoism, pride, jealousy, passion and others are scattered and destroyed, and all the cravings, which like rats continue to eat into the vitals of one's being, are destroyed.

When the Self is seen, all is seen. When the Self is heard, all that is needed to be heard is heard. When the Self is touched, all is touched. When the Self is realized, the mystery of creation is fully explored.

The Self is ever awake, even in those who continue to slumber in the dark night of ignorance. It strikes the ignorant with afflictions, but relieves the miseries of those who tread the path of virtue and wisdom. It grants the desires of Its devotees, and leads aspirants to the state of Self-realization. It is the Self that wears beautiful clothes, joins festive parties, enjoys numerous objects, and passes through numerous embodiments.

I am the Self. Just as the sky is untouched by clouds, the lotus untouched by water, and stones unaffected by fear and sorrow, in the same way, I am untouched by the clouds of mental distractions, untouched by the waters of attachment, and unaffected by the sorrows of the world.

Though forming an integral part of a lamp, the flame transcends the lamp, its oil, its wick, and its confinement, and in its luminous state cannot be tied or fettered even by the strongest of ropes. In the same

manner, the Vision of the Self arising out of the striving aspirant transcends the confines of body, Karmas and desires, and becomes the shining essence behind all that exists, ever free from all forms of bondage.

I am ever free. What have I to do with Karmas, desires, and the limited senses? Can the sky be fettered? Can the illumined mind be affected by the miseries of the world?

The body can be torn to pieces, but the Self is ever indestructible. A pot can be broken to pieces, but the ether within the pot defies all destructive forces.

Nature (*Prakriti*) presents enjoyments, the mind accepts them, and the body suffers from the miseries resulting from these enjoyments. The Self apparently becomes involved in the world through its illusory identification with the body, but when proper enquiry is practised, the taintless nature of the Self is realized.

What have I to do with the pleasures of the senses? And likewise, what have I to do with the miseries of the world? Let the conditions of prosperity and adversity continue to alternate like the rising and falling of waves. How can they affect Me who am like the ocean of fullness?

Let numerous desires of the mind drift in the vastness of the Self, even like the clouds in the vast sky. They do not touch Me, and I am not affected by them.

I have destroyed the enemy in the form of ignorance which had robbed me of discriminative intellect (*Viveka*). But now, by the grace of Lord Vishnu, I have recovered my *Viveka* and have attained the knowledge of the Self.

The power of knowledge has driven away the evil spirit of egoism that abode in the body for a long, long time. Now the tree of my body is decked with the beauteous blooms of divine virtues, for it is no longer possessed by the evil spirit of egoism.

Having attained the boundless treasure of discriminative knowledge, the long lingering poverty in the form of delusion has vanished. Now I abide in the Supreme Self.

I have seen all that is to be seen. I have known all that is to be known. I have attained all that is to be attained. There is nothing more that remains to be accomplished by me.

I have attained that spiritual land wherein evil does not exist, snakes in the form of sense-objects are extinct, the mirage of desires has vanished, the mist of delusion has been dispelled, and the four directions are free of the dust of distraction. Here under the shade of spiritual wisdom I enjoy supreme peace. I have attained the Self by adoring Lord Vishnu, by praying to Him and by the practice of mental serenity and spiritual observances.

By the grace of Lord Vishnu, the imperishable, egoless Self has been realized by me as my very true nature.

In the dark forest of *Vasanas* (subtle desires) there are many crevices wherein the snakes of desires dwell. There are also many pits in the form of repeated births and deaths, and many thorny bushes in the form of cravings. The forest is noisy due to the voices of so many unfulfilled desires. Furthermore, the forest is on fire, and thieves take advantage of the opportunity to rob the soul of all its wealth in the form of spiritual qualities.

The bitter enemy Ego has spread its snares consisting of numerous adversities and prosperities of life. For so long I have been tormented by this dark forest, but now the sun of wisdom shines in my heart. The enemy Ego has fled, and the forest has disappeared along with all its clamor and confusion.

No one knows where a flame goes when it is extinguished. In the same way, I do not know the passage by which the ego departed from me. I am the Supreme Self and no longer the ego-dominated personality.

The fires of misery have been extinguished by the shower of wisdom. The mirage of desires has vanished by the surging stream of bliss. Now there is no longer delusion, no longer pain, no longer petty desires or mental cravings. There is no longer heaven or hell for me, and no longer the revolving wheel of birth and death.

My mind has become like the autumn sky, free of the dark rain-clouds of egoistic vision. My mind has

become lit up with the moon of the Self. Adorations to Thee, O *Atman* Adorations to Thee again and again!

Adorations to Thee, O *Atman*. The crocodiles of cravings have disappeared and the lake of the mind abounds with bliss. Adorations to Thee again and again!

Adorations to Thee who are like a lake wherein bliss blooms as lotuses, and wherein the waves of worries have subsided. Thou art my innermost Self; adorations to Thee again and again!

Thou art the swan sporting in the lake of my heart. Thy wings shine with the light of Pure Consciousness. Adorations to Thee again and again!

Ever effulgent, dispeller of the darkness of the heart, all-pervading, Thou art like the Sun which, though invisible, enlightens the mind and senses. Adorations to Thee again and again!

Thou art flame without oil, the awakener of Supreme Love, the giver of Liberation. To Thee who are the mystic lamp that burns in my heart, I offer my repeated adorations!

Just as red hot iron is beaten and molded into a desired shape, in the same manner, I have beaten the mind that was tainted by worldly desires with the hammer of spiritual enquiry, and have thus controlled and destroyed it.

By faith did I remove faithlessness, by renunciation did I overcome craving, and by enquiry did I rid myself of ignorance. Having dispelled the doubts of the mind, and having torn the veil of ignorance, I have realized Thee—O My Innermost Self!

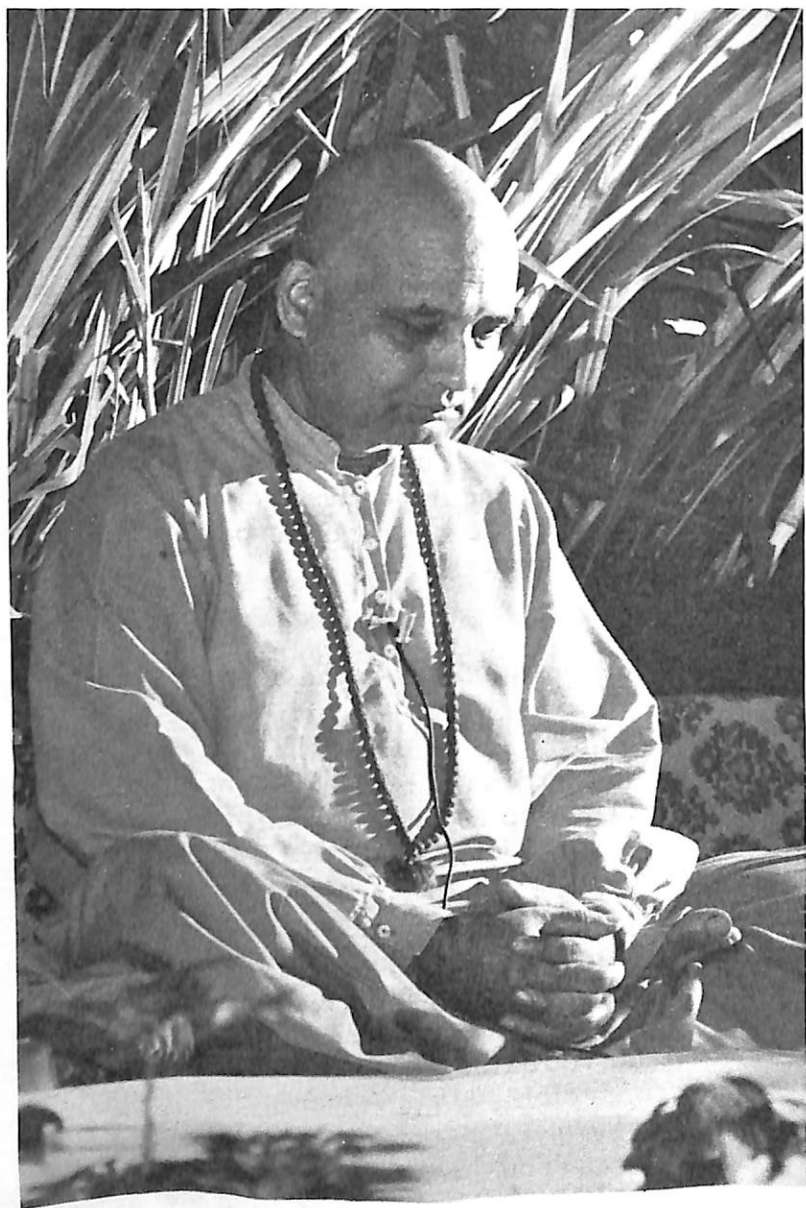
The Self is as real to me now as the body was to me during the state of ignorance. My mind has become quiescent like fire that has consumed all its fuel. Having crossed the ocean of the world-process, having released myself of the fetters of desires and delusions, and having freed myself of all miseries, I have now become the surging ocean of bliss. Adorations to Me who am the Self!

Section 36—*Prahlad Adores the Supreme Beloved*

Prahlad said: O Beloved Self, by great fortune you have appeared in the firmament of my recollection. You who are like the moon in the cloudless sky, unto You my adorations!

As long as You are not encountered, You assume the form of death, destroying those who are opposed to devotion. But when You are adored and encountered, You fulfill all the desires of Your devotees. I have beheld You as the essence of my very being. You have become eternally my very own Self.

How can You ever leave me now? You are everywhere. Where can You hide from me? It was ignorance that had separated You from me, and had



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created an illusory distance between You and me. But with the removal of ignorance, the distance has disappeared, and now You are I, and I am You!

I adore You in the form of Lord Vishnu, holding lotus, conch, mace and discus in your four hands. I adore You in the form of Lord Shiva who are adorned with the crescent moon upon Your forehead. I adore You in the form of Indra, the King of the celestial beings. I adore You in the form of Brahma—the creator of the universe.

You are the Ocean while I am a wave. But even this difference is from the point of view of name only. In reality, I am You and You are I.

It is You who have manifested in this creation. It is You who existed in the past. It is You who exist in the present. And it is You who will continue to exist for eternity.

Though essentially I have been nothing but You, yet I have wandered through the world-process due to ignorance. Now having discovered You in the cave of my heart, all my wanderings have ceased. The purpose of self-effort has now been accomplished. There is nothing more to be attained.

O God of gods, today I have found You; today I have discovered You in the form of My very Self. Now I have crossed the ocean of delusion. My adorations to You again and again.

O Beloved Self, how can there be any distance between You and me? Your Light illumines every thought of my mind. You permeate all the perceptions of the senses. You indwell all objects of the world. You are the fragrance in the flowers, the softness of touch in objects that are soft, the sweetness in objects of sweet taste, and the beauty of form behind all that is beautiful.

Having experienced the bliss of communing with You, all the pleasures of the world have become essenceless. You who have been sung by the *Vedas* and other scriptures now have become my very Self. How can I ever forget You?

Becoming the sun You illumine the earth. Becoming the moon You shed cooling light during the moonlit nights. Becoming the mountains You stand immutably on this world. You are the sustainer of all the elements as well as of all living beings.

You are my innermost Self. Adorations to You! You are Pure Consciousness wherein the taints of ego have been removed. Adorations to You!

Prompted by You the mind performs its functions of thinking and imagining. Prompted by You the senses move towards their respective objects. You are the prompter of the *Pranic* functions. You are the mover of the machinery of the body that consists of flesh, bones, fat, skin and blood.

Though devoid of the ego-sense, You are the destroyer of the wicked (the dark forces) and the

protector of the good (the bright forces). It is by Your might that the world with its numerous activities is sustained.

O My Soul! You have discovered Your Essential Nature. Now give up pride, anger, hate and crookedness. You have become the Self. How can You ever fall under the sway of the *Gunas*?

Remember again and again the humiliated state that you brought upon yourself through ignorance. Now having enquired into the nature of your essential Self, having taken recourse to the quest of "Who am I," may you laugh at the ways of the world, for they cannot overcome You anymore.

Those evil days have passed wherein you have been tortured by worries and anxieties. You abide in the body even as an emperor whose desires are ever fulfilled. Now you cannot be grasped by the miseries of the world, just as the sky cannot be grasped by one's fingers.

You have vanquished the elephant of mind. You have overpowered the wicked horses in the form of the senses. You have defeated the enemies in the form of the sense-objects. Now you have become the Supreme Emperor over all.

O Lord, You lie dormant in the ignorant, and when slightly awakened, You become the basis of worldly enjoyments. It is You who drink the honey (of pleasure) gathered by the bees of the senses.

You are the fragrance in the flower of the body.
You are the nectar that abides in the orb of the body.
Just as sap permeates the trunk, branches and leaves
of a tree, in the same manner, You permeate the body.

Without You, O Beloved Self, the world becomes essenceless. Deprived of Your Light, the universe enters into darkness. Nothing can exist without You. Nothing can be perceived without You.

When you shine in the function of pure intellect, the darkness of ignorance is dispelled. Just as the shining sun removes frost and mist, in the same manner, Your rising wisdom removes afflictions and miseries.

If the world were not sustained by You, all human realities would become as ridiculous as a wreath of lightning flashes. But sustained by You, the objects appear to be of value and significance to the soul.

You who fill the entire universe, adorations to You!
O Beloved Self, the embodiment of Peace, adorations to You. You are beyond the mind and senses, adorations to You! Glory to You! Victory to You!

I have bloomed into the fullness of the Self. I have attained *Nirvana*. I have vanquished ignorance and its effects. I have become the innermost Self. Adorations unto Me who am *Brahman*, the Absolute! Adorations unto Me who am ever free from birth, death and all miseries of the world, and who am ever immersed in Supreme Bliss!

Sections 37 to 39—*Lord Vishnu awakens Prahlad from Samadhi*

Sage Vasistha continued: O Rama, King Prahlad continued to reflect upon the nature of the Self until he passed into *Nirvikalpa Samadhi*. He became like a painted picture, and remained immersed in this state for a very long time. Days, months and years rolled on.

In the absence of the King, chaos began to prevail in the kingdom. The weak were oppressed by the strong, enemies began to destroy the cities, and the palacial buildings began to be demolished.

While reclining upon the couch of Shesha serpent, Lord Vishnu reflected thus: If King Prahlad is not awakened from *Samadhi*, the world will suffer a great loss. There will be increasing disorder and disharmony. Demons who contribute to the balance of forces in the world will be destroyed, and this will affect the harmony of the universe.

If the demons are destroyed, the gods will become contented. Being contented, they will not be interested in the welfare of the human beings, and the path of spiritual evolution will become clouded by illusion.* Let Me therefore awaken Prahlad from his *Samadhi*. Being enlightened, he will perform his duties until the end of his *Prarabdha Karmas* (fructifying Karmas), and while performing his duties he will continue to abide in the boundless Self.

*In the Cosmic Plan, the demoniac forces in the form of anger, greed, hate and passion are meant to enhance and brighten the divine forces in the form of universal love, humility, purity and truthfulness.

Thus having decided, Lord Vishnu, the Deity pervading over the three worlds, appeared before King Prahlad. He was riding on the Divine Garuda (eagle), while Goddess Lakshmi as well as Sages and Saints were adoring Him.

Lord Vishnu blew on the conch known as *Panchajanya*, and inspired King Prahlad to awaken into normal consciousness. Consequently, like the rising Ganges, the *Pranas* began to pulsate at the crown of his head, and soon they permeated the body of King Prahlad. Just as a withering plant is revived with a shower of rain, so too, King Prahlad's body was revived by the inflow of *Pranas*. King Prahlad thus came to normal consciousness.

To the awakened Prahlad, Lord Vishnu said: O Monarch of the Demons, there is no need for you to destroy this physical body. One who is Enlightened does not court death. You are meant to rule the world until the end of the present *Kalpa*. Continue performing your duty with the enlightened vision that all is the Self.

Those who possess agitated minds, who are ever pierced by the arrows of miseries, are fit to die, because death alone promotes their spiritual evolution.

Those who believe that they are nothing but their physical bodies, who are identified with the mortal personality, they deserve to die, for in their case death promotes their evolution.

Those who are fettered by the ropes of desires, and who are driven by the whims of the mind, they deserve to die.

Those who have allowed cravings to rob them of their discriminative wisdom, and who have been assailed by numerous afflictions, they deserve to die.

Those who have allowed the creeper of their mind to entwine their consciousness with attachment and hatred, which are decked with the flowers and fruits of pleasure and pain, they deserve to die, for death will lead to rebirth, and they will continue to reincarnate until they attain Enlightenment.

Those who have allowed the storm of passion to agitate the tree of their personality, and who have fostered the fire of mental and physical diseases in their being, they deserve to die.

He who has harbored in his body the terrible python of anger which yawns for prey, he who maintains within his heart the hissing snake of desire, for him it is worthwhile to die.

As long as there is identification with the body, death is inevitable. But when this identification has been removed, how can a Sage, who is not the physical body, possibly die?

O Prahlad, he who beholds the world with a vision that is not refracted by attachment and hatred, for him there is no death; he deserves to live eternally, for he is the Eternal Self.

He who is balanced in pleasure and pain, gain and loss, and who holds a poised mind in all conditions, he deserves to live for ever.

He who abides with the vision of truth and performs his duties in the world without being deluded by desires, his life is adorable; he deserves to live forever.

He who is like a placid lake abounding with the swans of divine virtues, he who is pure and enlightened, for him there is no death. His life is decked with glory.

He who is the source of joy to others, when people see, touch or listen to him, they are thrilled. If that is so, his life is indeed successful. He who radiates bliss and continues to shine like the full moon removing the miseries of the world, he deserves to live forever.

**Section 40—*Lord Vishnu Enlightens
the Demon-King Prahlad***

Lord Vishnu said: People in this world consider life to be the perpetuation of the body and death to be the relinquishment of the body, but this is not the view of the Enlightened. O Prahlad, you are above these erroneous attitudes. You are not the body, and therefore, you are beyond life and death.

Just as the association-less space (the ether or the sky) provides space for the growth of trees and other objects, but in itself remains detached and unaffected, in the same manner the Self gives space for the existence, growth and operation of the human personality.

O Prahlad, for one who is Enlightened this physical body does not exist. Therefore, whether there is the advent of the flowery spring or the raging storm of deluging winds, he remains unaffected, because what is there for him to gain or to lose.

Let the mountains crumble; the fires of destruction blaze everywhere; the winds of calamity rage in fury. The Enlightened Sage is ever free from all these, because he abides in the Immutable Self.

Whether beings around him are destroyed or allowed to prosper, the Sage of Enlightenment is unaffected by the shifting conditions of the world.

With the destruction of the body the Self is not destroyed, and with the development of the body the Self does not prosper, and when the body is active, the Self does not become involved in activity.

When the body-idea is removed, there is nothing to accept and nothing to renounce. Therefore, O Child, having renounced the notion, "I am the performer of action," you should also renounce the notion, "I am the renouncer of actions."

Though performing actions, a wise Sage does not perform any action at all; he ever abides in the actionless Self. Thus, when the sense of actorship and enjoyership is effaced from one's consciousness, one attains Liberation even during his present lifetime.

When attachment is uprooted from one's consciousness, one attains Liberation. Then, because of the absence of all distractions, even while engaged in daily activities, a Sage enjoys a peaceful state similar to the state of profound sleep. He views the world as if he were in a state of semi-sleep.

He whose mind delights in the Self, for him there is no pleasure in the objects of the world. Having been nourished by the nectarine bliss of the Self, a wise Sage is unaffected by the miseries of the world.

Therefore, O Prahlad, perform the duties of a ruler here in *Patala Loka* (Netherworld) until the termination of your *Prarabdha Karma* (fructifying action). Then you will become a *Videha Mukta*—one Liberated without the body. Whether with or without the body, you are ever one with *Brahman*, the Absolute Self.

**Section 41—The Demon-King Prahlad
is Blessed by Lord Vishnu**

King Prahlad gradually woke up from his *Samadhi* and said: O Lord, I have been exhausted because of constant concern for the Gods and the Demons, therefore, I have taken a momentary rest. But now, by Your Grace, I have discovered my essential nature. Now I am the Immutable Self whether with *Samadhi* or without *Samadhi*.

O Adorable God, for a long time I have meditated upon You through the internalized flow of mind, but now due to my great fortune, I am able to behold Your form even with my own physical eyes.

I had retired to *Samadhi* not because of grief, delusion, or fear of the world, and I had not intended to discard this body. I have attained insight into the fact that I am the Self and not this body. Therefore, the question of giving up the body did not arise.

O Great Divinity, such thoughts as, "I am renouncing the world." "I am supremely dispassionate." arise in those who are ignorant. Overpowered by these, the ignorant continue to suffer. But from the point of view of the Enlightened, there is nothing to renounce, for this world is nothing but *Brahman*.

The ignorant believe that pain is related to the body, and therefore, only after the death of the body will pain cease. But it is not so. It is only when the intuitional knowledge of the Self dispells the illusion

of body-identification that pain ceases to exist with or without the body.

This is joyous, this is sorrowful; this is mine but that is not mine—such thoughts continue to agitate the mind of the ignorant. But to the wise, such thoughts are totally dispelled.

O God of gods, I am ready to resume my duty as a King. May You accept my ritualistic worship and offerings.

Sage Vasistha continued: Thus saying, King Prahlad performed the worship of Lord Vishnu who was adorned with divine ornaments, and who bore in His four hands the divine conch, lotus, mace and discus, who was surrounded by celestial beings and Sages, and who sustained within his divine body the three worlds.

Highly pleased with King Prahlad, Lord Vishnu accepted his offerings and had him sit upon the royal throne with His blessings.

Lord Vishnu said: O King, may you continue to rule the earth until the termination of your *Prarabdha Karma*. May you maintain a mind that is free of attachment, fear and anger. You are Enlightened, therefore, you do not need any more instructions.

Having thus showered His blessings, Lord Vishnu disappeared, and King Prahlad resumed his royal duties with an Enlightened mind.

Section 42—*Insight into the Prarabdha of the Sages*

Sage Vasistha continued: O Rama, thus I have related to you the glorious story of Prahlad, the manner in which he attained Enlightenment and the elevated life he lived after Enlightenment. Whoever listens to this story with a discerning mind will become free of all sins.

Ignorance is the root of all sins, and is destroyed by the practice of enquiry into the nature of the Self. Even the slightest effort directed towards Self-realization removes multitudes of sins.

Whoever listens to these teachings of Lord Vishnu given to Prahlad will become free of all the sins of his seven past embodiments. There is no doubt in this.

Sri Rama asked: O Sage, the mind of King Prahlad was absorbed in *Samadhi*. What was the reason for its awakening at the sound of the conch proceeding from Lord Vishnu?

Sage Vasistha explained: O Rama, there are two types of Liberation: Liberation in life (*Jivan Mukti*) and Liberation with the termination of the bodily existence (disembodied Liberation or *Videha Mukti*). The Sage who is not affected by desirable as well as undesirable developments, who is beyond the currents of *Raga* and *Dwesha* (attachment and hatred), is indeed one Liberated in life (a *Jivan Mukta*). When

the *Prarabdha Karma* (fructifying Karma) of a *Jivan Mukta* is exhausted, his physical body comes to an end, and he is said to have attained *Videha Mukti*.

O Rama, as long as *Prarabdha Karma*, which is the cause of the sustenance of the body, has not been exhausted, so long the *Vasanas* (subtle desires) are capable of bringing the Sage back to the normal state of consciousness. Therefore, the blowing of the conch was just a pretext.

But to a *Jivan Mukta*, even though awake to the normal state of consciousness, he is ever rooted in the transcendental Self. He views the world as an illusory projection sustained by the Self.

Lord Hari is the Self abiding in all beings. His *Samkalpa* or will is infallible. Since He willed for the awakening of Prahlad, Prahlad returned to normal consciousness. However, the Will of Lord Hari is always in accordance with the operation of the *Prarabdha Karma* of the individual.

Since the *Prarabdha Karma* of King Prahlad had not been exhausted, and since he had to perform his royal duties in accordance with the Divine Plan, Lord Vishnu brought him back to normal consciousness.

O Rama, he who has secured the grace of Lord Vishnu is not affected by the terrible forces of *Maya* (Cosmic Illusion). Therefore, aided by Divine Grace an aspirant pursues the path of spiritual enquiry and attains Self-realization.

**Section 43—*Self-effort of the Individual
Secures Divine Grace***

Sri Rama asked: O Sage, your teachings are like the cooling rays of the moon, refreshing my heart with delight. My ears are never satiated with the nectarine words that proceed from your lips.

Please explain why King Prahlad sought divine grace instead of taking recourse to his own self-effort. You previously taught that self-effort is capable of leading a person to the attainment of the goal, then, why is it that King Prahlad was led to Self-realization through the boon given by Lord Vishnu?

Sage Vasistha explained: O Rama, the attainment of divine grace and the receiving of divine boons are flowers and fruits of the tree of self-effort. The fact that King Prahlad attained Self-realization through the boon of Lord Vishnu does not contradict the supreme importance of self-effort.

The innermost Self in every individual is the same as Lord Vishnu or the Absolute Self underlying all names and forms of the universe. Therefore, even though Lord Vishnu assumed an external form to shower His blessings on Prahlad, it is erroneous to think that Prahlad received Divine Grace by an act of destiny alone and not as a result of his self-effort.

Whatever is attained by a person in whatever place, know that to be the result of one's self-effort alone. If the Divinity were to give Self-realization to

anyone irrespective of whether he has practised self-effort or not, then, why shouldn't He, being all compassionate, grant Liberation even to camels and oxen? (Since this is not so, one's self-effort is essential in order to attain Liberation).

Endowed with both the continual practice of enquiry and increasing dispassion, he who has brought his hissing senses under control is bound to attain the highest.

O Rama, learn to adore the Self by the practice of listening and reflection. Constant enquiry into the nature of the Self is the best form of divine adoration. Lord Vishnu abides in every heart. But he who turns to an external God, ignoring the Indwelling Self (he who considers God as an external Being unrelated to the inner Self), is not a true devotee of God.

It is the attributeless Self that is meditated upon as Lord Vishnu, holding in his Hands his discus, mace, conch and lotus. This form of meditation is practised in order to purify the mind. Then when the mind is purified, the devotee realizes the Self in his own heart.

Just as a mango tree brings forth flowers and fruit, so the devotional movement sustained by self-effort brings forth the flowers of Divine Grace and the fruit of Self-realization. If the inward Self is not adored, all one's effort to please an external divinity is rendered void and fruitless.

Section 44—*The Story of Gadhi*

Sri Vasistha continued: O Rama, *Maya* (divine illusion), expressing itself as the world-process, is the boundless source of illusion. But by attaining victory over the *Chitta*, this *Maya* can be destroyed. I will therefore relate to you the story of Gadhi, which illustrates the power of *Maya* and also the mystic wisdom that removes it.

There is a country known as *Koshala* where there once lived a *Brahmin* known as Gadhi. He was dispassionate from his very childhood, and with the intention of practising severe austerity, he renounced his relatives and went into a forest.

One day in the course of his various austerities, he resolved to enter into a lake and remain there practising his austerity until Lord Vishnu appeared before him. Thus he entered into a beautiful lake abounding with blooming lotuses, and while remaining submerged in water up to his neck, practised intense austerity. Finally Lord Vishnu appeared before him and said, "O *Brahmin*, come out of the water and ask any boon of your choice. I will grant to you whatever you ask."

Brahmin Gadhi said, "O Lord, You who are like a lake sustaining the lotus of the three worlds, adorations unto You! I am desirous of seeing the extension of Your *Maya* which deludes all *Jivas* (individual souls)."

Lord Vishnu said, "May it be so! You will behold My *Maya*, and having developed insight into it, you will renounce it in order to attain Self-realization."

Thus saying, Lord Vishnu disappeared. Gadhi came out of the water and continued to live a life devoted to devotional practises and austerities. Some time passed, and one day, remembering the words of Lord Vishnu, entered the lake in order to take a bath as an act of ritual worship. He ducked himself under the water, and immediately a vision arose in his consciousness. He experienced the following course of events:

He saw himself as a dead person surrounded by grieving relatives. The body lay before them like a dispassionate ascetic, unaffected by their sorrows. It had entered into a sleep from which there is no awakening.

Though unmarried as Gadhi, this new person he saw himself as was married, and was surrounded by his wife, mother and various other grieving relatives.

He then saw the dead body being taken to a cremation ground and then set on fire. With a dispassionate look, he saw his body being consumed to ashes even like dry fuel.

**Section 45—Gadhi Witnesses Himself
Being Born as a Chandala**

Sri Vasistha continued: Thus, O Rama, Gadhi became identified with a different personality, and as such, witnessed himself dead and burnt to ashes. Then he experienced himself as an infant in a *Chandala* family (wild tribe, considered as outcastes).

He experienced the misery of dwelling within the womb of his mother, and after being born, he saw himself as a growing child in the *Chandala* household.

Time rolled on, and as a *Chandala* he became a boy of twelve. Soon he grew up to be a boy of 16 years of age—a handsome boy with broad shoulders, well-built body and dark complexion. He took to the profession of the *Vyadhas*, the hunters, and accompanied by dogs he would daily go into the forests to hunt deer.

In his youth he was wedded to a *Chandala* lady and lived a householder's life. He spent some time in amorous sports with his wife in the beautiful surroundings of the forest, and just as simple seeds of thorny plants give rise to thorny bushes, so too the couple became parents of several typical *Chandala* children who were ugly looking and cruel natured.

Time rolled on and this *Chandala*, named Kantanja, began to age. He developed a large family consisting of sons, grandsons and many other rela-

tives. But soon adversity visited them in the form of a persistent famine. It did not rain for many years and living conditions became difficult. To his great sorrow Katanja saw death and destruction all around him, and all his family members passed away one by one. He became alone in his worldly life.

Remembering his children and relatives, he shed many tears of grief for a long time. Then one day he renounced the forest where he was born and started wandering through various countries. In the course of his wanderings he entered into the capital of a country in the Himalayas inhabited by a certain hill tribe, called the country of Kira.

On that very day the king of Kira had died, and finding that the king had no heir, the ministers followed an ancient custom of selecting another king. The procedure was to decorate an elephant and place a garland in its trunk, and whomever the elephant would garland, that person would become their king.

By divine accident, the elephant placed the garland on Katanja, and soon he was hailed king and was brought to the palace in the midst of great rejoicing. There he was bathed, perfumed, and decked in royal clothes. He then shone like a king and began to rule Kira. To the people of Kira, his identity as a *Chandala* was unknown and they knew him by the name Gavala—the King of Kira. Assisted by able ministers, enjoying royal luxuries, and attended on by many queens, King Gavala became a successful ruler.

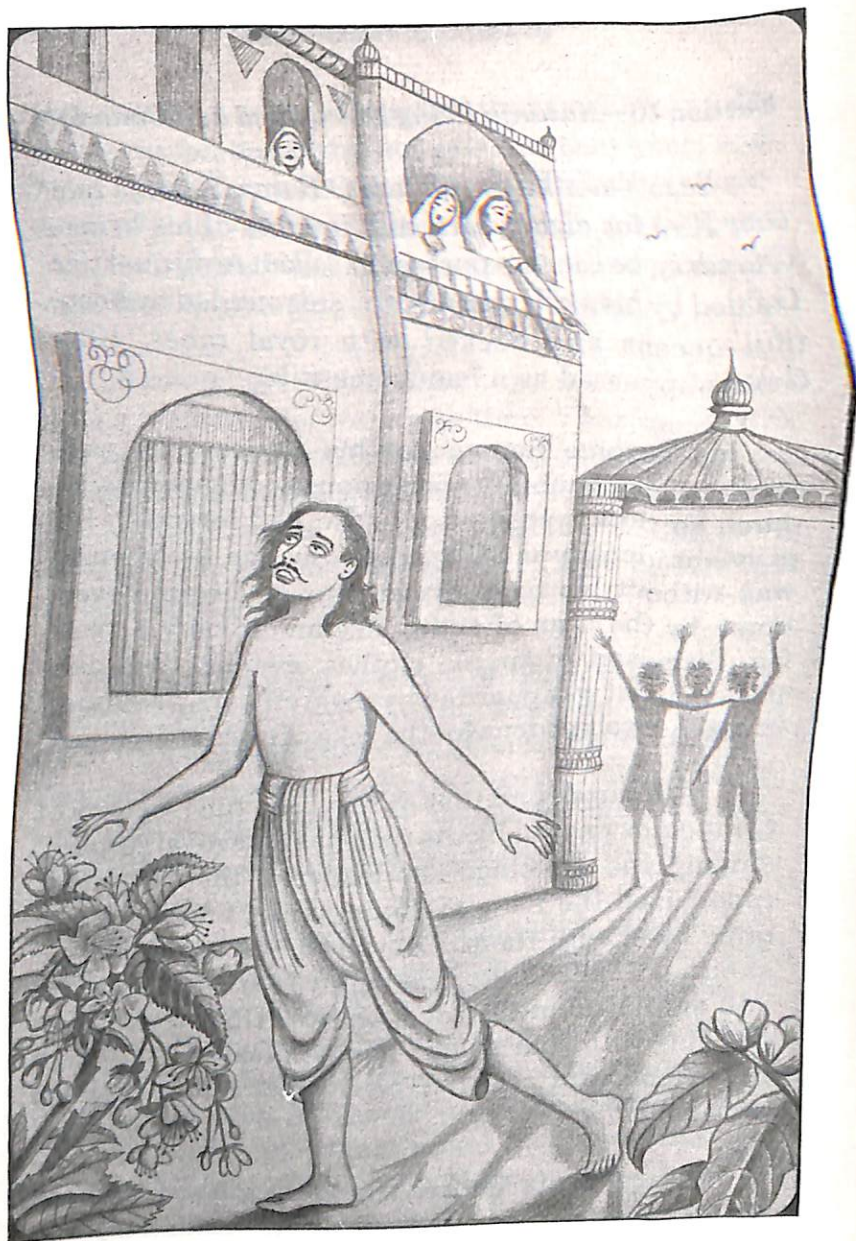
Section 46—*Katanja Being Discovered as a Chandala*

Sage Vasistha continued: O Rama, Katanja ruled over Kira for eight years, and in spite of his being a *Chandala*, he came to possess excellent royal qualities. Guided by his skilled ministers, surrounded by beautiful queens and decked with royal robes, King Gavala appeared as a handsome ruler.

He became famous for his compassion, generosity, acts of nobility and various good qualities, so much so that it seemed as if he had forgotten his previous identity as a *Chandala*. But one day when he was without his royal ornaments, he became overcome by the urge of acting like an ordinary person. So, disguised in simple clothes, avoiding the main passage that was guarded by royal officers, he slipped into the royal gardens for the sake of mere amusement.

It so happened that at the same time a group of *Chandalas* passed by the road near the royal gardens, singing and dancing. The leader of the *Chandalas* recognized the King as *Katanja*, the *Chandala* who once lived with them. Overjoyed, the old *Chandala* shouted, "O *Katanja*, how happy I am to see you! Are you employed in the royal service? Do you entertain the king with your songs? I am so pleased to see you, my friend and relative, after such a long time of separation!"

King Gavala ignored the words of the *Chandala* leader and hurriedly proceeded to the palace. But the words of the *Chandala* leader had been heard by the



King Gavala in his old attire of a Chandala.

ministers and queens who were seated in the upper balconies of the palace. They all now realized that their King was a *Chandala*—an outcaste.

When the King returned to his palace, he was ignored by his queens and ministers. Soon the news of his true identity spread to all the officers and citizens of his country, and just as a dead corpse is ignored by all, so too, the King was ignored by all. His joys gone, his face turned into a withering flower. He divested himself of his royal beauty and elegance, and became the very embodiment of inauspiciousness.

In those days, any association with a *Chandala* was considered sinful and humiliating, and the only way one could expiate the sin of associating with a *Chandala* was to be consumed in the burning flames of fire. So the women of the palace, as well as many people from the kingdom built burning pyres and jumped into them. Pathos prevailed everywhere, and there was chaos and disharmony in every direction.

Deeply wounded in his heart, and considering himself as the cause of the sorrows of so many people, the King decided to end his life himself by jumping into fire. Without mental agitation, he prepared a pyre, set it on fire, and having entered it, was soon turned to ashes.

O Rama, Gadhi, who was witnessing these experiences, now woke up from his dream-like vision. He emerged out of the water, and having completed his ritual worship, hastened to his cottage.



King Gavala in his old attire of a Chandala.

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Section 47—Gadhi Hears the Story of Kira Country

Sage Vasistha continued: O Rama, Gadhi was immensely astonished at his unique experience. He began to reflect within himself, "Who am I? What have I seen? What have I done? I am a *Brahmacharin* (a celibate). My mother has passed on. How is it that I saw myself surrounded by mother, my wife and other relatives? How is it that I saw myself as a *Chandala* with a large family, living a life of hideous deeds? Surely all this that I have seen has been the workings of *Maya* (Cosmic Illusion). Nothing of this really happened."

Gadhi again and again reflected upon his experiences while in the lake, and at the same time continued to abide in his forest cottage. Then one day an ascetic showed up at Gadhi's *Kutir*, and Gadhi welcomed him with all his heart. After they had eaten they talked about their spiritual austerities and experiences. In the course of their conversation, Gadhi asked his guest why he was so emaciated and weak?

The ascetic told him that far away in the north there is a country known as Kira, where he had lived for a month. During that time there was a *Chandala* disguised as a king and who ruled that country for eight years. When he was discovered, he entered into fire. Many who had associated with him also entered into fire for the expiation of their sins accrued by consorting with a *Chandala*. The ascetic too felt the need of purifying himself, and thus fasted for a long

time. This, he explained to Gadhi, was the reason for his emaciated body.

Sage Vasistha continued: O Rama, Gadhi asked the ascetic again and again about the country of Kira, and again and again received the same answer. After the ascetic had left, Gadhi developed the strong curiosity to visit the forest of the *Chandalas* and the country of Kira in order to see the way things were with his own eyes.

Thus one day he left his *Kutir* and, after passing through many villages and cities, reached the forest of the *Chandalas*, which was a veritable hell. He discovered the dwelling where he had lived for many years as Katanja. He found the bones of cows, horses, buffaloes and other animals strewn in front of that dwelling, the same bones which were once chewed and licked by him as a *Chandala*. Seeing this, immense dispassion grew within his heart.

Then he met the inhabitants of that village and heard from them the story of Katanja: how he had lost his wife, sons and dear relatives during a fierce famine, how he had gone to the country of Kira and became a king, and how he had ruled that country for eight full years. Then he heard how he was discovered as a *Chandala*, and had come to a tragic end by jumping into burning fire.

Gadhi was amazed to realize that the dream-like vision he had experienced while he was in the lake was true to the last detail.

Section 48—*Gadhi Visits the Country of Kira*

Sri Vasistha continued: O Rama, amazed and curious, Gadhi then decided to visit the country of Kira. He crossed many rivers, mountains and forests, and finally reached Kira. He asked the inhabitants of the city about the *Chandala* who had been their ruler, and they all related the very same story which he had experienced during his vision while in the lake. He also found the country, its royal palace, all its inhabitants, and all the details of the city to be exactly as he had seen them through the personality of Katanja as King Gavala.

Gadhi reflected upon his strange experience again and again. He could not understand how the experiences of a dream-like vision could turn into actual realities in the world. He resolved to propitiate Lord Vishnu for the removal of his confusion, and thus practised austerity in the cave of a mountain for some time.

Pleased with his austerities, Lord Vishnu appeared before him saying, "O Gadhi, now that you have seen My *Maya* which has created this world, what do you desire?"

Gadhi offered flowers and asked with folded hands, "O Lord, how is it that what was seen in a dream-like vision has become a reality in this world? How can dreams that arise out of impure *Vasanas* (subtle desires) turn into realities in this practical world?"

Lord Vishnu explained, "O Gadhi, the fact that you saw your dream verified in this world does not mean that this world is a reality. In fact, the sky, the earth, the mountains and all that you see are non-existent. All human experiences are conditioned by *Maya*. Dream as well as waking are nothing but modifications of *Maya*."

'O Gadhi, that which you consider as real is in fact non-existent. You are being deluded by the workings of your own *Vasanas*. Endeavor to be free of *Vasanas* and attain Liberation." Thus saying, Lord Vishnu disappeared.

Section 49—*Gadhi Finally Attains Enlightenment*

Sri Vasistha continued: Gadhi again and again went to the forest of the *Chandalas* as well as to Kira. But again and again confusion darkened his reason. So again he took recourse to austerity in order to please Lord Vishnu.

When Lord Vishnu again appeared before Gadhi and asked what more he wanted, Gadhi said: O God of gods, for six months I have wandered in Bhuta Mandal (the forest dwelling of the *Chandalas*) and Kira, and I have heard the same story again and again from the people living there. There has been no discrepancy in their accounts.

All illusory perceptions are contradicted, like dream upon waking, but these happenings in Bhuta

Mandal and Kira remain uncontradicted. How then am I to understand that all this is nothing but *Maya*?

Lord Vishnu replied: Sometimes many people may experience similar dreams, and yet those dreams remain unreal. In the same way, even though it seems that many people have verified the events of Bhuta Mandal and Kira, yet they are all deluded by *Maya*.

Due to the similarity of *Prarabdha Karma*, many soldiers come together to fight a war, wherein they attain victory or defeat; either they are killed or they kill their enemies. They all have similar experiences. Similarly, led by their conditioned minds, the people of Kira and Bhuta Mandal experienced similar happenings which were nothing but reflections in *Maya*.

Even the awareness of the duration of time is nothing but a projection of the mind. The timeless Self exists in one's very heart. It does not accept nor reject anything.

O Gadhi, while performing your duties in daily life, continue to direct your intellect to the Self through meditation and enquiry. Rising above the sway of *Maya*, attain Enlightenment here and now.

Sage Vasistha continued: Thus saying, Lord Vishnu disappeared. Gadhi then entered into a cave to practise deep meditation. For some months he continued to worship Lord Vishnu within his heart. Then in course of time, Lord Vishnu again appeared before him. Gadhi offered prayers and devotional worship to the Deity.

Gadhi asked: O Lord, I again and again recollect my experiences as a *Chandala*. I have also reflected upon the workings of *Maya* which continually deludes the soul, thereby forcing it to experience repeated births and deaths and untold sufferings. Please tell me what I should do. Please give me instructions in overcoming the delusions of the mind.

Lord Vishnu said: O *Brahmin*, this world is projected by the demoniac *Maya*. Overcome by *Maya*, the soul becomes forgetful of its essential Self; and this forgetfulness plays havoc with the soul by creating countless illusions of repeated embodiments.

Maya renders the impossible possible. You, the people of Kira country, as well as those of Bhuta Mandal, were equally deluded. O Gadhi, although from the absolute point of view all names and forms are illusory, I will explain your identity as a *Chandala* from a relative point of view.

Once there lived a *Chandala* who had his home in Bhuta Mandal and who became the king of Kira. The story of the *Chandala* was reflected in your mind because you were desirous of understanding the mysteries of *Maya*. As a result of this, you became identified with the *Chandala* and passed through all the experiences that he had. In reality, however, you were not the *Chandala*, nor did you have anything to do with those experiences.

O Gadhi, in the same way, your present identity as an individual personality is a form of reflection cast in the stream of your mind. You are not this personality, and the world in which you live is merely an expression of *Maya*. When you rise above *Maya*, you will discover yourself as the Supreme Reality.

Sometimes a person completely forgets an object or situation which he had experienced before, as if it had never existed; and sometimes an object never experienced before seems as if it had been experienced in the past. This is all due to the workings of *Maya*.

Just as Yogis who possess the knowledge of the three periods of time view future happenings as if they are contents of the past, in the same manner, your mind reflected the happenings related to Katanja who existed in the past. (And even this explanation is only from a relative point of view.)

Those who are ignorant are deluded by such notions as, "I am this body." "This property is mine." "These possessions are mine." But the Enlightened ones are not deluded by these.

On the other hand, an Enlightened Sage possesses the vision, "I am all this." He does not perceive duality in his consciousness. That is why he is like a ship in the ocean of the world, unaffected by the currents of pleasure and pain.

O Gadhi, the disease of the world-process is considerably reduced in your intellect, but as yet there remains the root which must be removed so that you may be fully established in the Self.

Your *Chitta* is the central axle of the rotating wheel of *Maya*. If you stop your *Chitta*, this wheel will stop. If you allow your mind to be dissolved in the Self, you will not be affected by the world any more.

O Gadhi, get up. Practise enquiry and reflection for ten years in a mountainous region. You will attain the unobstructed vision of the Self. Thus saying, Lord Vishnu disappeared like a dissolved cloud in the sky, or like an extinguished flame, or like a subsiding wave in the ocean.

Gadhi then proceeded to the Rishyamuka Mountains where he practised intense meditation, enquiry and reflection for ten years. And just as trees become bereft of leaves in winter, so too, as a result of growing *Viveka* (discriminative knowledge) the personality of Gadhi became free of all attachments. Gadhi attained Enlightenment.

Free of sorrow and fear, enjoying the fullness of Bliss within his heart, Gadhi roamed freely as a *Jivan Mukta* (Liberated Sage). Though living in this world, he was ever immersed in the Bliss of the Self.

Section 50—*The Methods of Controlling the Mind*

Sri Vasistha continued: O Rama, this *Maya* which causes great delusion is indescribable. *Brahman* is the only support of this mysterious *Maya*. By taking recourse to *Brahman* alone, one can rise beyond *Maya*.

This *Maya* causes confusion in those who lack the capacity of vigilant enquiry. Remember how Gadhi experienced within two *Muhurtas* (96 minutes) the life of a *Chandala* that extended for many years? Furthermore, those experiences which were doubtlessly unreal turned out to be verifiable facts because of the mysterious operations of *Maya*.

Sri Rama asked: O Sage, how can this wheel of *Maya* which has the mind as its center be stopped in order to be free of the world-process?

Sri Vasistha explained: O Rama, when the *Chitta*, the center of the wheel, is controlled by the intellect, then *Maya* ceases to hold its sway over a Yogi. Therefore, instead of taking recourse to superficial methods of eradicating *Maya*, such as pilgrimages, charity, austerity and the path of various ritualistic actions, try to adopt the direct course of controlling the *Chitta* for overcoming *Maya*.

This world-process exists within the *Chitta*. When the *Chitta* is destroyed, the world-process ceases to exist. Just as a mosquito that was confined

to the space within a pot attains its release when the pot is broken, in the same manner, the soul becomes free of the world-process when the vessel of the *Chitta* is broken by the force of wisdom.

When the mind is allowed to be focused on the present moment, away from the thoughts of past and future, then it brings about its own negation. Therefore, do not pursue the objects of the past or future. Allow the mind to be constantly focused on the present alone. This is an effective method of controlling the mind.

During every moment of the present, endeavor to be mentally vigilant. Neither allow your mind to turn to the things of the past, nor allow it to dwell on things of the future.

As long as desire for objects is maintained in the mind, so long will *Maya* continue to operate through it. As long as there are clouds, so long will rain showers continue. But when desire is renounced and the Self, which is distinct from the mind, is constantly kept before one's vision, then ignorance, which is the source of the mind and the world-process, is bound to be destroyed.

The Self is devoid of mentations. It is untainted by the thoughts and desires of the mind. Wherever the mind exists, there do the desires and concerns for objects flock, much as crows and vultures flock to cremation grounds.

It is true that Sages possess mind, but for them the seeds of the world-process have been burnt by the fire of wisdom. Devoid of the roots of the *Vasanas*, the world-process cannot flourish in their hearts.

Adopting persistent self-effort, endowed with the firm resolve to attain that wisdom in this very life, one should take recourse to good association and to the study of scriptures. The spirit within one's being is the basis for the realization of the Self. Behold how a shining jewel that has fallen into deep water is discovered by its own light. Therefore, be guided by the luminosity of your own spirit, and dive deep into the waters of your existence. You will be led to the realization of the Self.

While talking, opening and closing the eyes, accepting and rejecting objects, and all such activities, at all times be devoted to the Self by keeping yourself detached from the operations of the mind. Do not forget the Self whether in life or in death, whether in pleasure or in pain.

The thoughts of near and far depend upon the illusory notion, "I am the body." Having renounced such thoughts, be devoted to the Self that is eternal and immutable.

Be devoted to the Self whether your body is young or old, whether you have prosperity or adversity, whether you are in dream or deep sleep.

Though awake, discover the sleep-less sleep of the Self. Enjoy the sleep-like tranquility by meditating upon the truth: "I am not this body. I am the Self that has manifested in all this. I am indeed all this."

In this world there is neither "mine" nor "yours." Having renounced all differences and dualities, abide in the Self. Then even, like a thunderbolt, you will become invincible.

For him who is tasting the bliss of wisdom, even poison turns out to be nectar. In fact, when the illusion of the world-process is removed, the nectarine Self alone exists. Men who are devoid of the self-effort that leads to Liberation are "men" only in name; in fact, they are donkeys in the shape of two-armed beings.

For one who does not endeavor to realize the Self, all his movements in this world are seeds for future pain and sorrow. All his actions are like the wanderings of a dead corpse. But he who is devoted to the Self, he alone truly lives.

By thinking of the objects of the world and by entertaining desires for the pleasures of the senses, the mind becomes increasingly involved in the world-process. This is called fattening the mind. By considering the body as the Self, and by developing attachment towards one's wife and children, and towards the objects of the world, the mind becomes fattened.

By the intensification of the ego, by increasing the sense of possession, and by considering the body as the seat of enjoyments, the mind is led to fatten itself. Such a mind is rendered gross by greed, passion and anger.

This fattening of the mind is the cause of numerous embodiments, and abounding with countless births and deaths, mind is repeatedly infested with the serpents of sorrow and misery.

With the increase of mental and physical ailments, the spirit in a person increasingly believes in the reality of the world. Being increasingly concerned with the illusions of gain and loss, the mind is fattened.

Nourished by the milk of evil desires, fanned by the enjoyments of the senses and caressed by infatuation, the serpent of the mind grows into a mighty poisonous cobra. Then, bitten by the cobra of the mind, one is led to suffer through numerous embodiments. While ordinary poison gives rise to pain or to a burning sensation, and possibly to a fainting condition, the poison of the mind continues to yield the unending pain of the world-process, causing intense sorrow and suffering for the spirit.

O Rama, the poisonous tree of mind grows in the field of the body, and numerous expectations are its ramifying branches. Imaginations are the shining leaves, numerous worries and anxieties are its blossoms, while birth, death and various afflictions are its fruits.

Desires for enjoyments are like the buds decking this tree. This poisonous tree is deeply rooted and is like a mountain for those who do not take recourse to enquiry. Therefore, enquire into the nature of the Self in order to root out this poison-tree of the mind.

Or consider the mind as a mighty elephant, roaming in the mountains of the outgoing senses. Illusion and infatuation are its eyes. Infested with the worms of hatred and jealousy, it is terrifying in its appearance. Though it desires to feast on the lotuses of divine qualities, due to its restlessness it tramples them. Attachment and hatred are its mighty tusks, and with them it is ever engaged in rooting out the trees of patience, faith and endurance. O Rama, with the shining weapon of intellect sharpened by the practice of spiritual enquiry, pierce the mighty head of this elephant, and destroy it.

Or consider the mind as a crow that abides in the nest of the heart and which is ever attached to the enjoyments of flesh. Bitter words and actions that pierce the hearts of others constitute its ugly beaks. Selfishness constitutes its vision, and the evil *Vasanas* are its feathers and wings. O Rama, drive this inauspicious crow of the mind from the nest of your heart by the practice of enquiry into the nature of the Self.

Or consider the mind as a *Pishacha* (an evil spirit). Seated on the tree of ignorance, it is joined with its consort in the form of cravings. It continues to wander in the forest of numerous embodiments. This

Pishacha can be driven out by the practice of *Mantra*—a mystic formula of great utterances received from one's spiritual preceptor.

Of the snake of the mind, good and evil are the two fangs while various forms of worry constitutes the poison. This snake continues to bring about the death of not merely one body, but numerous bodies through countless embodiments. It feeds on the air of the *Pranas* and glides on from one body to another. It is to be overcome by meditating upon *Brahman* who is Truth, Wisdom and Infinity.

This *Chitta* may as well be considered as a vulture feeding upon physical bodies through numerous embodiments. With its tattered body, pecked by worries and anxieties, this vulture abides in the cremation ground of the body. With its long neck of expectations, this vulture of the *Chitta* is most inauspicious for the soul. However, if you are rid of this vulture, you are indeed most fortunate.

Chitta can be compared to a dark cloud that gathers in the sky of the heart by the wind of *Vasanas*. Expectations flash like lightning, while torrential rains of adversities pour down. O Rama, this cloud is to be dispersed by the repeated renunciation of desires for the objects of the world.

Or, the mind is like a net in which the spirit is trapped. Thoughts and desires are the ropes and strings of this net, while good and evil *Karmas* are the knots of the net. Although numerous bodies are

woven into this net, it can be destroyed by the weapon of renunciation of desires; it can be burnt up by the fire of wisdom.

This *Chitta* is like a python abiding in the cave of one's body. Anger and irritability are the poisons that ooze through its breath. Cravings constitute its ever unsatiated open jaws. He who procrastinates falls prey to this python. But, O Rama, by kindling the fire of wisdom, you may reduce this python to ashes.

Just as the fury of one weapon is fought by another similar weapon, in the same manner an impure mind is overcome by a pure mind. Develop *Vairagya* (dispassion) and consider all objects of the world, even the enjoyments of the heavens, as worthless as a straw. Having overcome the *Chitta*, enjoy the nectarine bliss of Liberation.

**Section 51—*The Story of Sage Uddalaka:
Mind and Its Distractions***

Sage Vasistha continued: O Rama, even after one has intellectually grasped the nature of the Self, one cannot attain the supreme peace of Liberation until his mind is freed of its distractions and his intellect is converted into intuition through the practice of unobstructed meditation.

The mind in a human being has grown extensive due to its numerous attachments towards both the objects of this world as well as the objects of the heaven-

ly worlds. It has become subtle and illusive due to the predominance of *Vasanas* (subtle desires). It is like a sharp sword in its cruelty as it obstructs the continuity of the joyous experience of *Samadhi* (superconsciousness). Though shining in the light of the Self, the mind is to be considered as a sharp razor, and therefore, should be handled with constant vigilance.

However, the creeper of pure intellect has grown in the fertile soil of your body due to your previous divine Karmas. Therefore, you now need to nourish this creeper with the water of discrimination.

As long as your body has not been struck down by the scorching rays of time (death), it should be utilized in the service of Guru and in the practice of spiritual disciplines for the development of the creeper of the intellect. O Rama, adopt the method of reflection as pursued by Sage Uddalaka who transcended the five elements, tore the veil of ignorance, and became one with the Absolute.

Sri Rama asked: O Sage, how did Sage Uddalaka practise the mystic reflection leading to the transcendence of the five elements and finally to the removal of the veil of ignorance?

Sage Vasistha said: O Rama, in the valleys of the *Gandhamadana* mountains where the trees are tall and flowers abound on the earth up to one's knees, there lived a young ascetic known as Uddalaka. He had not even reached the age of youth when his mind became inclined to pursue the highest Self.

By the force of his austerity, his mind became purified and he became intent on ending the misery of the world-process. He reflected thus within himself: What is the goal of human self-effort? What is that attainment which puts an end to all sufferings and sorrows, and which terminates the process of repeated birth and death?

When will I attain that state of Liberation wherein I will be immutable like the clouds on the snowy summits of the mountains?

When will the boisterous waves of distractions subside in the ocean of my mind? When will I look upon Karmic involvements with a spirit of detachment, and laugh at my present predicament?

When will my mind become detached from the thoughts and desires of the world, even like the lotus leaf which, although abiding in water, is ever unaffected by the water which surrounds it?

When will I cross the turbulent stream of craving with the help of the raft of discriminative knowledge?

When will I ridicule the outgoing movements of the mind which, even like children playing with toys, are ever involved in the illusions of the world?

Just as a mind cured of its lunacy attains calmness, in the same manner, when will I become free of the distractions caused by various thoughts and imaginations?

When will I transcend the body-consciousness and discover my oneness with the vast universe, and thus attain infinite contentment within my heart?

The *Puranas* say that when the churning of the ocean ceased it became the abode of Lord Vishnu; similarly, when will my mind, having gone beyond all agitations, become like the calm milky ocean sanctified by the presence of spiritual wisdom?

When will I attain the enlightened state of Liberation, and thus pass my days with the growing vision of detachment from the world-process?

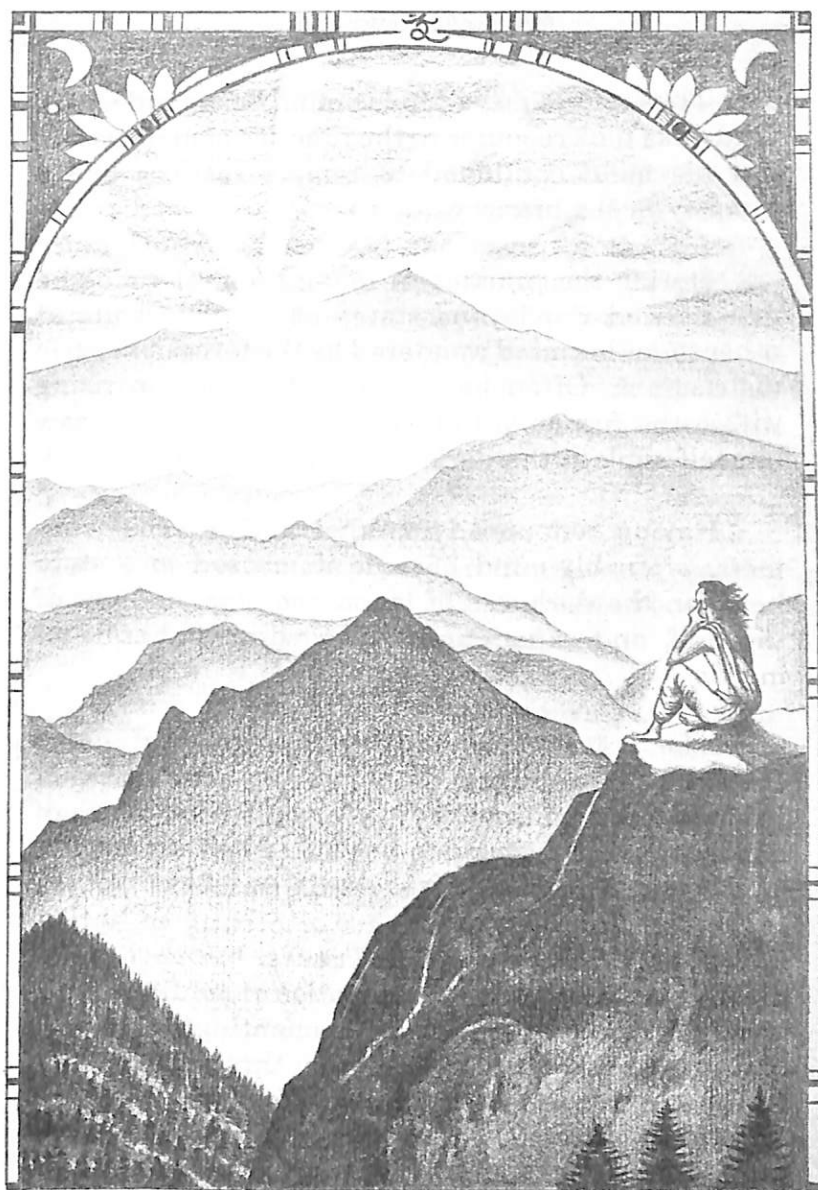
When will the dark night of ignorance come to an end, which has harbored the owls of worldly desires and has brought the frost of dullness on the lotus of the heart?

Abiding in the cave of the mountains, when will I enter into *Nirvikalpa Samadhi* and enjoy a rock-like invincibility?

When will the elephant of ego be overpowered by the lion of intuitional vision and attain its destruction?

When will the birds of the forest prepare their nests on my head as I am immersed in the experience of *Nirvikalpa Samadhi*?

When will I be able to renounce the lake of the world-process which abounds with the aquatic growth of craving, and is infested with numerous creatures in the form of desire, anger, hate and passion?



Sage Uddalaka immersed in deep reflection.

Thus reflecting within his mind again and again, Uddalaka took recourse to the practice of meditation, but his mind continued to remain restless like a monkey in the branches of a tree.

During the practice of meditation, at times he experienced the joyous states of *Sattwa*, while at other times his mind wandered by the force of *Rajasic* distractions. Often he saw an effulgent sun rising within the firmament of his heart, but then he saw himself sunk in the darkness of ignorance.

Having renounced external and internal contacts, often his mind became immersed in a state between the darkness of ignorance and the light of the Self, and experienced a long lingering state of inertia.

Like a tree uprooted by a storm and being shaken by the waves of the ocean, the mind of Uddalaka was continuously affected by the storm of distraction. It continued to be shaken by the waves of cravings in the ocean of the world-process.

Then Sri Uddalaka took recourse to a cave of the mountains for the intensive practice of meditation on the Self. It was located in an enchanting scenery of nature, and soft breeze blew into it through the west, and was adorned with creepers laden with fragrant flowers. Above all, it was like the very abode of serenity, and was like a secret dwelling of the forest-goddesses.

Section 52—*Sri Uddalaka Practises Spiritual Enquiry*

Sage Vasistha continued: O Rama, just as a bee enters a lotus desirous of enjoying nectar, so too, the Muni Uddalaka entered the cave for the sake of enjoying *Atmic* Bliss. He spread a deer-skin and sat facing north in the pose of *Siddhasana*, intent on discovering the real nature of the Self. Then he renounced the objects of the world, which made his mind like a rainless cloud, ready to disperse itself in the vast sky of the Self.

Sri Uddalaka reflected thus: O foolish mind, what have you to do with the thoughts of worldly objects? Wise men do not take recourse to objects which only bring misery in the end.

Those who run after worldly enjoyments are like the dull-wits who, having renounced the nectarine Mandara Forest, runs into the forest of poisonous trees.

O mind, whether you enter into the nether-worlds or ascend to the higher worlds of Brahma, unless you are nourished by the nectar of *Shama* (serenity), you cannot rest in the boundless bliss of the Self.

O mind, you are capable of giving me only immense pain on the basis of numerous desires for worldly objects. But now you have renounced your expectations for worldly enjoyments, and therefore, instead of giving pain, you must give rise to infinite joy.

O mind, as long as you are involved in acquiring objects that give pleasure and in renouncing objects that cause pain, so long you cannot enjoy spiritual bliss.

O mind, you have wandered in this world like a foolish frog confined to the pit of the limited personality. You continue to croak in vain at the shower of illusion. What have you acquired so far through your endless wanderings?

O mind, why don't you endeavor to enter that *Samadhi* which gives rise to the bliss of Liberation? Why do you pursue the world of sound, which is caught like a deer attracted to the sound of bells.

O dull-witted mind, why do you run after the pleasures of touch? Behold how elephants are trapped when they are lured by a she-elephant and fall into a pit specially prepared for this purpose by a trapper.

O foolish mind, why do you run after the objects of taste. It is because of taste that so many fish are pathetically caught by fishermen.

O ignorant one, why do you run after the pleasures of sight? See how, due to their senseless attraction to light, moths are utterly destroyed.

O childish mind, do not run after the objects of smell. A black bee, intoxicated by fragrance, continues to linger in a lotus bloom and is mercilessly trampled by an elephant.

O dull-witted mind, see how these creatures, led by a single sense, lose their life—the deer by sound, the elephant by touch, the moth by sight, the fish by taste, and the black bee by smell. See how much more disastrous it would be if you allow yourself to be dominated by all these five senses.

O mind, just as a silk worm creates its own bondage, in the same manner, you have woven the fabric of *Vasanas* (subtle desires) for your own bondage.

First you need to purify yourself by *Karma* (selfless action) and *Upasana* (devout meditation). Then you should take recourse to listening to the scriptures reflection and meditation, until the rising sun of wisdom enfolds you within its radiant light. Herein lies your victory.

O mind, you know very well that your inclination towards the objects of the world will lead you to the repeated experiences of birth and death. You know that you will be led to the heights of heavenly enjoyments as well as to the depths of hellish sufferings. If you do not give up this humiliating tendency you will forever be immersed in misery.

Or, why should I instruct you, O mind? You have no reality of your own. How can you exist without the Self? Just as a cloud is nothing but vapor which in turn diffuses in the vast sky, in the same manner, when the light of reflection acts upon the cloud of mind, it dissolves in the vastness of the Self. O mind, by the force of enquiry you are going to be dissolved in the Self.

O mind, why should I instruct you? You are illusory in nature, and therefore, you are going to disappear. In the eyes of the wise, it is foolish to instruct an illusory phantom.

O mind, you who are the sustainer of the illusory ego-self, I am not associated with you in any form. I am the self-effulgent *Atman*.

In vain have you given rise to the erroneous vision which sustains the illusion of multiplicity consisting of "I," "you," "this," "that," and the like. You are able to overpower the dull-witted, but you have no control over Me.

Just as an elephant cannot be confined in a small hole, in the same manner, I, who am the Pure Self, cannot be confined in the limited confines of the mind.

It is indeed regrettable, O mind, that you have taken your abode in the dark well of the world-process abounding with snakes, scorpions, and evil spirits in the form of anger, greed, passion, and other impurities. Therefore, I am bent upon abandoning you.

Further, you have given rise to the deluded notion that this perishable body is Me, the Self, and thus you have become the basis for the ego-sense. This ego-sense is considered as a reality only by those who are immature in their understanding, like children. The wise consider it as an illusory appearance.

I have examined this body from head to foot, and I have not found the "I" anywhere in it. The real "I am" is the essence behind the three worlds. It is the Self, unconditioned by time, space and causation.

I am the embodiment of Pure Consciousness. I am wisdom absolute. I am a mere witness to the illusory presence of the drifting mind. Now by the light of enquiry, O mind, you are going to be dispelled and destroyed.

O mind, you have two aspects—the vibratory aspect belonging to the *Prana* (the cosmic life-force) and the knowledge aspect belonging to the Self. Birth, disease, old age, and death belong to the body. You as well as the ego-sense have no reality of your own.

So long I have been overpowered by the cunningness of *Ajnana* (ignorance), and thus, I have been tortured in the same way as a fawn is kept in fright by a ferocious wolf in the forest.

Now, fortunately, I have discovered the thief that had stolen the precious treasure of wisdom. That thief is the mind which I will no longer welcome. Just as a passing cloud hovering over a mountain summit does not belong to the mountain, in the same manner, this mind does not belong to Me. The Self abides in the body and is all-pervasive, eternal and non-dual.

There is no place for the illusory and false ego-sense. Since the ego is unreal, all relationships sustained by it are also illusory. Beyond the multiplicities created by the ego-sense the Self exists as the only reality.

Just as a stone and a piece of iron are in contact with one another, they are not mutually related, so too, the body, senses, mind and consciousness seem to be in contact with each other, but in reality are completely distinct from each other.

Deluded by the ego-sense, people say, "This belongs to me, but that object belongs to somebody else." But in reality, the Self alone is. When the knowledge of the Self rises in the firmament of one's heart, the mist of delusion disappears.

I deem that state to be my object of aspiration wherein this ego-sense is forgotten forever and never more recalled. The absolute relinquishment of ego is the highest attainment.

This ego-sense flourishes through the identification with the body and its relationships, and thus spreads its ramifying branches of vices and afflictions.

When the cloud of ego swells with the waters of impure *Vasanas* and rains on the fields of the heart, the *Kadamba* tree of the body becomes decked with numerous blooms of defects and diseases.

The misery of life persists until death, and the

affliction of death continues through numerous embodiments. The objects of enjoyment in every embodiment are subject to the defect of perishability. Such being the case, this world-process is an expansion of pain.

Just as rain clouds are attracted to the lofty peaks of mountains, in the same way, the clouds of impure mentations, worries and anxieties, are drawn to the high-rising illusions of the ego-sense.

When the ego-sense is destroyed, the tree of the world-process begins to wither away. It is no longer nourished by the waters of attachment and hatred.

Because of the advent of the Garuda bird of spiritual enquiry, the black cobra of craving which had made its residence in the hollow of the tree of body has now fled to an unknown land.

This bodily existence is as momentary as the rising of a wave in the ocean. He who imposes the sense of "I-ness" on this transient body is indeed dull-witted. How can the ocean, having ignored its unbounded vastness, become confined to a single wave saying, "This transient wave I am."?

During dream, one may see oneself being slain and consider it as a reality. One may see tigers, thieves and other objects, and becomes affected by them as if they were real. Much in the same way, in spite of the fact that the objects of the world are unreal, when caught in the dream of the world-

process, the soul continues to experience pleasure and pain through them. While an ordinary dream ceases when a person wakes up, this long dream of the world-process comes to an end only when a person attains Enlightenment.

I am merely an actor in the drama of the world-process. Having assumed the role of the ego, I play the part of being an instructor for you (O mind!), by assuming the role of the senses I perceive the objects of the world, and by identification with the body, I sit, or walk, or move. But, in reality, I am the Self wherein the ego-sense is absolutely negated.

Alas! like a deer lost in a dreary desert, I have been wandering in the world-process for a long, long time. But I have now discovered the falsity of the ego-sense. I am no longer subjected to the repeated cycles of birth and death.

The eyes see, the sense of touch perceives softness or hardness, the tongue tastes, the nostrils smell fragrance, and the ears hear. But where is the ego-sense? How does it come to exist? Indeed it has appeared even like mirage in a desert.

O mind, when the ego-sense is negated, although the activities of the body continue, they do not give rise to Karmic entanglements. Devoid of *Vasanas* (the subtle desires subsisting on the false ego-sense), a Sage performs actions; and since his actions do not create sorrow, delusion, fear and grief, he experiences supreme peace.

Therefore, O dull-witted senses, continue to perform your functions. When you are freed of the pressure of *Vasanas*, you will become tame; you will not cause the Karmic entanglements leading to the endless miseries of the world. O Senses, you have simply imagined happiness in the objects. Children create toys out of clay and grieve when they are destroyed. In the same manner, you senses have only imagined happiness in objects.

In fact, from the absolute point of view, the objects of the senses are the Self. Just as waves, eddies, bubbles and foam are non-different from the ocean, in the same way, the objects are non-different from the Self.

It is *Trishna* (craving) that holds the senses together, just as a string holds the beads of a rosary together. But just as when the string is broken, the beads disperse, in the same way, when craving is renounced, the senses no longer create bondage for the soul.

The *Vasana* that sustains the ego and the senses is constituted of illusion, and therefore, is eradicated by the sword of renunciation of *Samkalpa* (desire).

O *Chitta*, you are the support of all these senses. Having discovered the falsity of your existence, merge in the taintless Light of the Self. Do not assume the form of *Chitta* anymore. May you discover your essential nature which is the blissful Self.

Section 53—*The Self is Unaffected by the Subtle Desires*

Sri Uddalaka continued his reflections: Limited objects, composed of earth, water, air and fire, can become fragrant when treated with fragrance, but the Self, which is unlimited, cannot be rendered fragrant by the *Vasanas* (subtle desires) of the mind. In other words, the Self is ever untouched and untainted by *Vasanas*.

The *Vasanas* do not belong to me. The reflection of the Self in the intellect has created the illusion of the *Vasanas* on the basis of sense-perceptions. Just as children imagine ghosts in the shadows of the dusk, even so the mind has imagined the presence of *Vasanas*.

I am Pure Consciousness. The objects that are thought of by the mind during waking state do not touch Me who am beyond the mind. Also, I am untouched by the experiences of dream; in fact, I am beyond waking, dreaming and deep sleep states.

I am untouched by the good and evil Karmas which have given rise to the existence of the physical body. Let this body continue to exist or let it die—I am ever beyond it; I am the untainted Self.

The body is subject to birth and death, but Consciousness is all-pervading and eternal. The individual soul is but a reflection of the Absolute, which is beyond the range of being killed or killing anyone. When the Self is realized, how can the Sage be killed, or how can he kill anyone?

Consciousness is independent of the life of the body, because it is the Life of all that lives. It is the essential nature of all that has been spread out in the world of time, space and causation. He whose life is Pure Consciousness, for him there is no need for the life of the body.

Life and death are mere imaginations of the impure mind. The Pure Self is ever untouched by them.

He who is identified with the body is subject to the wheel of birth and death. But, O Self, you are devoid of this identification, therefore, how can you experience the dualities of the world.

To whom does the "I-ness" belong which is projected on the body? Does it belong to the ego, or to the mind, or to the objects? The ego is an illusory appearance. The mind is nothing but a mirage, while the objects are inert. Then to whom does this "I-ness" belong?

The body is nothing but a blend of flesh, blood and bones, and the mind is negated by the power of spiritual enquiry. How can the "I" be identified with these?

The senses are ever interested in the fulfillment of their appetites. They do not care for the good of this fictitious ego. All objects are material in nature. How can the "I" be seen in them?

Even the *Gunās* of Nature continue to perform their functions. *Sattwa* shows light, *Rajas* creates confusion, and *Tamas* spreads darkness. The "I" is not seen in them.

O mind, just as a person who mistakenly hears a false report that his son is dead, even though his son is actually alive, suffers in vain, so too, you continue to suffer on the basis of the false objects of the world.

But in fact, it is not your fault. It is I who have imposed the ego-sense on you, which has thus created the mirage of the world-process in which your own existence is a form of illusion.

When the mind has ascertained the falsity of all objects and it becomes free of all mentations, there arises the supreme state of *Nirvana* (Liberation).

When the mind is convinced of the fact that all objects are unreal, the subtle desires of the heart begin to wither, much like the blossoms of trees struck by a hail-storm during winter.

When the mind is freed of worldly desires, it is able to reflect upon the Self and becomes established in its essential nature as Pure Consciousness. This is known as Liberation. The real "I," or the Self, is ever free from the illusion of bondage and release.

It is the *Chitta* (mind) that draws in its limbs in the form of the senses, and having kindled the fire of

spiritual knowledge, sacrifices its *Chitta-hood* (its mind-ness) and emerges as Pure *Chit* (Pure Consciousness).

A warrior detaches himself from his dear relatives in order to allow himself to be sacrificed in a battle for the sake of winning higher worlds. Similarly, the *Chitta* detaches itself from the body and the objects of the world and, having accepted its own destruction, wins the Supreme Abode of *Brahman*.

Mind and body are mutual enemies. While these two are in constant conflict, *Jiva* (soul) finds no happiness in their presence. A person who comes between two soldiers who are discharging arrows at each other must suffer from the arrows of both parties. In the same way, the soul suffers from the miseries caused by both the body and mind.

Just as a child imagines a ghost, in the same way, the mind first imagines the existence of the body, and then inflicts it with various miseries. The body, in turn, desirous of destroying the mind, adopts an evil path intended to create attachment, hatred, grief and delusion in the mind.

Though the body is like a son to the mind as the father, yet this dull-witted son is ever desirous of hurting the father. The mind gathers Karmic seeds on the basis of the body, and the body in turn generates Karmic entanglements for the mind. Thus they mutually hurt each other.

It is only through the destruction of the mind that the body can become free from its physical troubles. Therefore, it strives to tread the path of wisdom in order to bring about the end of its persistent enemy, the mind.

Mere destruction of the body does not cause the destruction of the mind, because mind is able to create another body. This process continues until mind is enlightened, and is thus reduced to the state of Pure Consciousness.

The togetherness of the body and mind is meant to lead the soul to the state of Enlightenment. Just as fire and water, though opposed to each other, work together in cooking food, so too, the body and mind work together in order to achieve the twofold purpose of enjoyment (*Bhoga*) and release (*Moksha*) for the soul.

When the *Chitta* is destroyed, the cycle of birth and death terminates. In such a case, with the termination of the body there is no possibility of a future embodiment. But when *Chitta* is intensified through egoism, attachment and hatred, it gives rise to numerous embodiments, even like the radiating branches of a mighty tree.

I have destroyed the forest of the mind which was entwined by the creepers of craving and a-bounded with the trees of desires. I have reached the Supreme Abode of Liberation.



When the desires for the objects of the world are destroyed, the mind is no longer involved in its mentations. Then the subtle desires exist only to be dispersed in the vastness of the Self, like rent clouds in the vast sky.

After the destruction of the mind, if the body, which consists of blood, flesh, marrow and bones, exists or does not exist, it is of no consequence to me. It used to be my enemy, but now I have nothing to do with it.

I am no longer related to the mind which seeks the body for the fulfillment of its desires. I exist beyond the body and mind as the Supreme Self.

I am no longer overpowered by ignorance. Pain, sorrow, and grief have come to an end. Now it does not matter whether the body exists or not.

Just as lowly persons are not admitted before the presence of a king, in the same manner, the mind and senses have no access into the domain of the Self. And without them, how can the *Vasanas* find their way to the expansion of the Self?

Just as clarified butter is no longer a part of milk, in the same manner, I am no longer related to the body, mind or senses. However, they will continue to delight me, even like the presence of good neighbors, until the termination of the *Prarabdha Karma* (fructifying Karma).

Away from worldly associations, I am now surrounded by celestial beings in the form of divine virtues. They are my near and dear relatives and consist of purity, fulfillment, compassion, universal love, truthfulness, wisdom, bliss, immutability, non-covetousness, all-pervasiveness, fearlessness and non-duality.

Section 54—*Sage Uddalaka's Spiritual Practice*

Sage Vasistha continued: O Rama, having thus ascertained his pure intellect, Sage Uddalaka adopted the lotus pose and, with eyes closed, began to practise meditation on *Om*.

His chant of *Om* sounded like a bell, reverberating upwards. Sage Uddalaka continued chanting *Om* until the *Pranas* reached the crown of his head, and he found himself face to face with the Absolute Self.

There are three and a half syllables in *Om*. First he meditated upon the "A" aspect of *Om*, and associated it with the practice of *Rechaka* or exhalation of breath. By his mental vision he saw his body becoming empty of the *Pranas*, in the same way as Sage Agastya in ancient times had emptied the whole ocean by drinking it.

Adopting the "U" aspect of *Om*, he practised *Kumbhaka* or retention. During this state the *Pranas*

were neither external nor internal, neither upward nor downward, but became still like an ocean without waves.

Then adopting the "M" aspect of *Om*, Sage Uddalaka practised *Puraka* or inhalation of the breath. He imagined that he had drawn nectar into the depths of his soul, and thus became cool and calm like a mountain covered with snow.

Then the Sage took recourse to the process of transcendence indicated by the half syllable of *Om*. He withdrew his senses and remained steady in the pose of meditation, even like a mighty elephant tied to a post. Then he proceeded to purify his mind in order to attain *Nirvikalpa Samadhi*.

With the increasing purification of the *Chitta*, Sage Uddalaka gradually attained intuitive knowledge. He became free from the distractions caused by the world-process, and became established in the Supreme Self, the substratum of the world and the Non-dual Reality.

Having separated himself from the body, the Sage experienced an indescribable state. He became one with the Divinity, who is homogeneous, pure and eternal, and is the ocean of bliss.

He became steady like a flame of a lamp unaffected by wind, or like a painted picture, or like an ocean without waves, or like a cloud that does not yield rain.

Sage Uddalaka remained immersed in *Samadhi* for a very long time. During that period, he saw the *Siddhas* (celestial beings endowed with great psychic powers) and gods that dwell in the heavenly regions. Then, *Siddhis* (psychic powers) capable of bestowing upon a person the glory of Indrahood presented themselves before the Sage, but considering them to be mere toys in the hands of children, he did not accept them. For six months the Sage remained absorbed in this blissful *Samadhi*, and as a result of this, he attained *Jivan Mukti*—Liberation in life.

Gods, *Siddhas*, Lord Shiva surrounded by His attendants and other Divinities all presented themselves before Uddalaka, offering their benedictions to the Sage. The mind of the Sage rose beyond joy and sorrow, and thus attained a state known as *Anananda* (the joy-less state, since it is the negation of all concepts of happiness based upon the world of relativity).

He who has enjoyed heavenly bliss is not tempted by the pleasures of the earth. In the same manner, he who has attained Liberation is not drawn to the objects of the world, whether he lives for a short time or for thousands of years.

This is indeed the highest abode. Having reached this a Sage is no longer deluded by the world-process. He who has enjoyed heavenly gardens, such a person cannot revel in a forest of thorny bushes. In the same manner, a Sage does not delight in the objects of the world.

If a person becomes an emperor, he does not revert to poverty and humiliation. In the same manner, having attained the blissful state of Liberation, a Sage does not turn back to the objects of the world.

Gods and other celestial beings requested the Sage to get into their celestial chariots in order to grace them with his divine presence. They spoke of the glory of the heavenly worlds, urging him to come and enjoy the celestial pleasures. But the Sage graciously rejected them and continued to abide in the Self.

He passed his time roaming in the picturesque valleys of the mountains, passing through gardens and orchards, enjoying various sights of nature. At times he entered into profound *Samadhi*, maintaining that state sometimes for a day, sometimes for a month, and sometimes for a year or more.

Whether in *Samadhi* or out of *Samadhi*, the Sage was ever established in *Brahman*. His external actions became his divine sport, and his mind, being free from all worldly *Vasanas*, enjoyed everlasting meditation at all times.

With the destruction of *Raga* and *Dwesha* (attachment and hatred), he became one with *Brahman*. Just as the sun distributes its light in a homogeneous manner, in the same way, the Sage experienced the homogeneous Light of the Self.

Gradually the Sage passed on into the state of *Satta-Samanya*—he became the very essence of all

that exists. Even the subtle impressions of the world-process were gradually eradicated from his heart.

Crossing the ocean of distractions, breaking the fetters of Karmas, dispelling the clouds of doubts and imaginations, rending the veils of illusion, effacing the memory of the world-process, Sage Uddalaka became one with *Brahman*. He did not turn to body-consciousness any more.

Section 55—*The Liberation of Sage Uddalaka*

Sri Vasistha continued: O Rama, Absolute Consciousness is free of all impurities. This visible world-process does not exist in It in the three periods of time. When the impressions of the world are eradicated from the mind, a Sage attains the state known as *Satta-Samanya*—homogeneity of existence. It is the Pure Existence of the Self after the negation of the world-process.

Just as a tortoise withdraws its limbs into its own body, in the same way the Sage withdraws the world into the Self, ultimately attaining *Satta-Samanya* during the sixth and seventh steps of wisdom, known as *Padarthabhavana* and *Turiya*.

Sage Uddalaka, having attained this supreme state which is the destroyer of all fears, continued to abide in the house of the world-process awaiting the complete cessation of his *Prarabdha Karma* (awaiting his physical death).

Having lived a long time, Sage Uddalaka resolved to give up the body in order to be a *Videha Mukta* (one Liberated after death). With this intention, he entered a mountain cave and, in lotus pose and with closed eyes, he meditated upon the Self as the reality behind all sense-perceptions. Having controlled the *Pranas*, his body, mind and senses became free of all agitations and the Sage became like a painted picture. Then he brought about the dissolution of all the thought-waves of the mind by meditating upon the Self.

As long as the *Chitta* has not tasted the bliss of the Self, so long it is unable to endure the discipline of withdrawal from objects. But when it tastes that bliss, it becomes like a bee after honey—it becomes so immersed in the experience of bliss that it allows itself to be dissolved in the Homogeneity of Absolute Existence.

Sage Uddalaka thus passed into the state of disembodied Liberation (*Videha Mukti*) with his face beaming of joy. He became one with the Absolute. He became the Self of all.

His lifeless body remained in the same spot for six months, becoming dehydrated by the rays of the sun. The skeleton created a musical sound as the wind blew through it.

One night Goddess Chamunda and her attendants appeared at the place of the dead body of Sage Uddalaka. The Goddess took the dead body and

placed it on her crown as an adornment. Thus, even the physical body of the Sage was given the place of highest honor by the Goddess. Blessed indeed is the state of Liberation!

Section 56—*The Samadhi of a Sage*

Sage Vasistha continued: O Rama, having taken recourse to reflection, dispassion, and the practice of *Samadhi* (mental concentration leading to super-consciousness), gradually ascend the heights of wisdom until you rest peacefully in the Self. Along with the practice of listening (to the teachings of the scriptures), reflection, faith (in the words of the spiritual preceptor), and other disciplines that purify the mind, you should continue to enquire into the nature of the Self until you are able to negate this illusion of the world-process.

You may either adopt a gradual movement on the path, or you may attain instantaneous Liberation by the force of your enlightened mind. When your intellect becomes free of all impurities, it tears the veil of ignorance and leads you to instantaneous Enlightenment.

Sri Rama asked: O Sage, you are the knower of past and future. There are two types of Sages—those who are engaged in actions in their daily lives, and those who have taken recourse to solitude in the forests or caves for the unobstructed experience of *Samadhi*. Please tell me, which are the better of the two?

Sri Vasistha explained: O Rama, when a Sage is fully established in the understanding that this world is illusory in nature, he experiences boundless peace within his heart. And this experience of inner peace continues whether the Sage is engaged in actions or whether he is immersed in meditation. Therefore, true *Samadhi* is the state of being established in the Self, wherein all the desires and distractions of the mind are dissolved.

Some Sages engage themselves in action, while others are engaged in the practice of profound meditation. Both have attained the same goal. From an advanced point of view, both are established in *Samadhi*. (The apparent differences in their lives are caused by the differences in their *Prarabdha* or fructifying Karmas).

The experience of inner peace, consequent upon the dissolution of all desires (subtle and gross), is the highest goal; it is the fruit of endless austerities. One should strive to attain this goal.

Though practising *Samadhi* (Raja Yogic lower *Samadhi*), if a Yogi harbors desires that distract his mind, his practice of *Samadhi* is like the dancing of a mad person. On the other hand, if a Sage is free of desires, he may dance like a mad person and yet be ever immersed in *Samadhi* (the highest state of superconsciousness).

Whether devoted to action or to meditation, if the Sage is free of desires and is established in the Self, he is ever immersed in *Samadhi*.

The Sage whose mind is free of subtle desires, though engaged in actions, does not create any Karmic entanglement, because he is free of the sense of "doer-ship." On the other hand, though apparently engaged in deep meditation, a Yogi who continues to sustain many desires in his unconscious, continues to create Karmic entanglements.

The non-doership of the *Chitta* is the best form of *Samadhi*. It is the giver of Supreme Peace and Liberation.

It is *Chitta* that either promotes *Samadhi* because of its desirelessness, or promotes the lack of *Samadhi* because of its desires. Therefore, O Rama, strive to free your *Chitta* of subtle desires (*Vasanas*).

As the *Vasanas* are reduced, a Yogi advances on the path. When the *Vasanas* are completely destroyed, he becomes established in the Self, wherein he is absolutely free of Karmas.

With the increase of *Vasanas*, the *Chitta* intensifies the sense of "doer-ship," and thus, gives rise to untold miseries. Therefore, one must strive to destroy the *Vasanas* of the unconscious.

Samadhi is that spiritual process which enables a person to be free of the erroneous sense of "I-ness" and "mine-ness" relating to the body and the objects of the world. Consequently, a Yogi becomes free from grief, fear and desires, and is established in the Self.

O Rama, having renounced the two erroneous concepts—"I am the body" and "These objects are mine"—may you abide in the Self. Then you may do whatever you choose: either staying immersed in *Samadhi* on a mountain summit or abiding in the palace performing your royal duties.

Those householders who have attained mastery over their minds and are free of the defects of egoism, anger, hatred and others, are able to enjoy the peace and solitude of the forests, even in their own homes.

For Enlightened men like you, home and forest are both alike. O Prince, when the mind is freed of delusions, like the autumnal sky bereft of clouds one enjoys the solitude of forests even in a noisy city. But if the mind is filled with attachment, hatred, and many desires, even a forest would appear like a crowded city.

By the increase of the impressions of attachment and hatred, the mind remains distracted; and even when it seems to enter into a state of calmness, it still contains the seeds of numerous distractions, much in the same manner as sleep contains the seeds of dreams. But when these impressions are removed by knowledge, one experiences *Nirvana* or Liberation.

He who sees the Self in all and all in the Self is said to be in the possession of a controlled mind. Since he sees the Self in all, there is no possibility for him to become attached to any limited object.

In the absence of attachment, it is impossible to entertain hatred. When the mind is not distracted by attachment and hatred, it is said to be controlled.

Just as people who gather in a market-place engage themselves in various activities while remaining indifferent to each other, so too, a Sage beholds this world as a gathering in a market-place, and therefore, he does not develop attachment or hatred towards anyone.

It is the Self that has expressed Itself in the form of both the inner world consisting of the mind and senses, and the outer world consisting of the objects that are perceived by them. In fact, the Self is free from "inside" and "outside." It is free from internal and external differentiations.

When the mind is afflicted by egoistic desires, this whole world becomes a source of misery. Then the heavens, the earth, the air, the fire, the mountains and the rivers, and all directions become filled with the fires of grief. But for him whose mind is immersed in the bliss of the Self, this whole world becomes peaceful, and although engaged in actions with the help of his organs of action, he is ever immersed in *Samadhi*.

Serene like the sky, a Sage beholds the Self in all objects. He looks at a stone and piece of gold with equal vision. For him all the glories of the world, from the pleasures of the earth to the boundless glories of the world of Brahma, are insignificant.

Such a Sage may remain in poverty or abide in great fortune; he may be united with his relatives and friends or may be separated from them; he may roam in prosperous countries or abide in desolate places; he may dance and sport or he may practise austerity in mountain caves; he may anoint his body with fragrant ointments or jump into burning flames of fire; he may commit acts of vice or perform acts of great virtue (he is beyond virtue and vice); he may live for a long time or may die in a short while. The Enlightened Sage is ever established in the Self and is not affected by the illusory conditions of the world. Just as gold, whether it has fallen into mud or is kept underneath a crystal case in a palatial room, remains the same, in the same manner, the Sage is ever the same.

When an illusion of a snake is removed, one becomes happy to discover a rope as being the substratum of the illusory snake. In the same manner, when the illusion of the ego-sense is removed, one discovers the Self as the underlying Reality behind all names and forms.

Whatever action a Sage performs, whatever he gives as a gift, whatever he eats, whatever he offers as an oblation into the sacred fire, he does all with the vision that he is not the doer; he is the Self.

He has no need for action, nor has he any need for renouncing action. Thus rising beyond both, he abides in the Self.

Just as flowers do not bloom in stones, in the same manner desires do not arise from the enlightened mind of a Sage. If desires are seen to arise, they are perceived by him as waves or ripples in the Ocean of the Self. Therefore, he is never distracted from the vision that all this is the Self.

A Sage becomes one with the world, and the world becomes one with him. Endowed with the vision of wisdom, he sees unity everywhere. And having discovered his spiritual identity, he becomes the very substratum of the universe. Freed of the illusion of duality, he is ever Liberated.

Section 57—*The Apparent Externalization of the Self*

Sage Vasistha continued: O Rama, just as saline taste is homogeneous in salt, in the same manner, *Brahman* is homogeneous in all the objects of the world. Just as sweetness is homogeneous in sugar, in the same way, *Brahman* is homogeneous in all the objects of the world.

That which is the Essence of water is also the Essence of all that exists. That which is the Essence of a stone is also the Essence of all this universe. It is that Essence which has assumed the forms of "I" and "you" and all the objects of the world.

That which is the Essence of the ether element is also the Essence of the whole universe. And it is that Essence which has assumed the forms of "I" and "you" and all the objects of the world.

Just as nectarine rays emanate from the moon, so too, the worlds emanate from the Self. Just as lustre emanates from a diamond, so too the world emanates from the Absolute.

For the Supreme Self there is nothing to be acquired or known in this world, and there is nothing to be tasted or experienced. The Self is the essence of all experience, the embodiment of Pure Awareness.

Just as liquidity abides in water and wind in the atmosphere, in the same way, this world abides in *Brahman*. In fact, this world has no independent existence. Seen through intuitional vision, this world does not exist.

The individual soul continues its individuality as long as it is identified with the senses, mind and body, which are the illusory products of *Maya*. But when the soul frees itself of these illusions, it discovers its essential identity as *Brahman*.

When the soul enters into illusion, *Brahman* undergoes a process of illusory modification and appears as the world-process. Caught in the world-process, the soul then continues to experience numerous cycles of birth and death. But by taking recourse to the scriptures and to the teachings of spiritual preceptors, the soul discovers the Essence behind the objects that are enjoyed and the subjects that enjoy them. That Essence is *Brahman*.

There is no essential difference between the soul and the Creator (*Jiva* and *Ishwara*), between the

Prajna (the subject identified with the causal body in sleep) and *Turiya* (the subject free of all identifications). When ignorance is removed, all this becomes *Brahman*.

This entire universe is nothing but *Brahman*, who is self-effulgent, full of bliss, indivisible, homogeneous, free from beginning and end, and supremely peaceful.

Section 58—*King Suraghu Develops Dispassion*

Sri Vasistha continued: O Rama, I will relate to you an ancient story of a great king and the manner in which he attained spiritual enlightenment.

Once upon a time, at the foot of the Kailasha Mountains, there lived a wild tribe known as *Hemajata*. They were ruled by an illustrious king, Suraghu by name. He was generous and valiant, and vanquished his enemies even as the sun vanquishes darkness. He tirelessly engaged himself in the performance of his various duties, and amassed immense wealth for his country.

As time passed, *Vairagya* (dispassion) dawned on him. He began to reflect thus: Why am I ruling over my subjects by the force of my arms. Why am I inflicting pain and sorrow in their hearts? Doesn't every living being feel pleasure and pain exactly like myself? Should I continue to punish the criminals and

reward the righteous? My mind does not find rest anywhere in this world. All my actions seem to be of no purpose.

Thus did King Suraghu reflect within his mind again and again. One day Sage Mandavya arrived at the palace, and King Suraghu, having duly greeted and worshipped the Sage, sought his spiritual guidance.

King Suraghu said: O Sage, I am immensely delighted with your auspicious presence. Surely the merits of my past actions have born fruit in the form of your divine presence. My mind is afflicted with numerous worries. Please impart spiritual instructions to me who am sinking in the darkness of illusion. Please enlighten me so that I may be endowed with equal vision.

Sage Mandavya replied: O King, just as mist is dispersed by the warmth of the sun, in the same manner, delusions of the mind are dispersed by knowledge. By taking recourse to self-effort, you should cultivate virtues such as dispassion, discrimination and self-control. Then allow your intellect to bloom into intuition through listening to the scriptures, reflection upon their teachings, and meditation upon the Self. By doing so, your mind will become invulnerable to the afflictions of the world.

Just as with the advent of winter, clouds begin to disperse in the sky, in the same way, by the practice of enquiry, the doubts of the mind are dispersed and the firmament of the heart becomes free of the scorching heat of afflictions.

O King, thus should you reflect: "What is the reality behind human relationships and the various objects of the world? Who am I? What is the nature of this world? Who is subject to birth and death?"

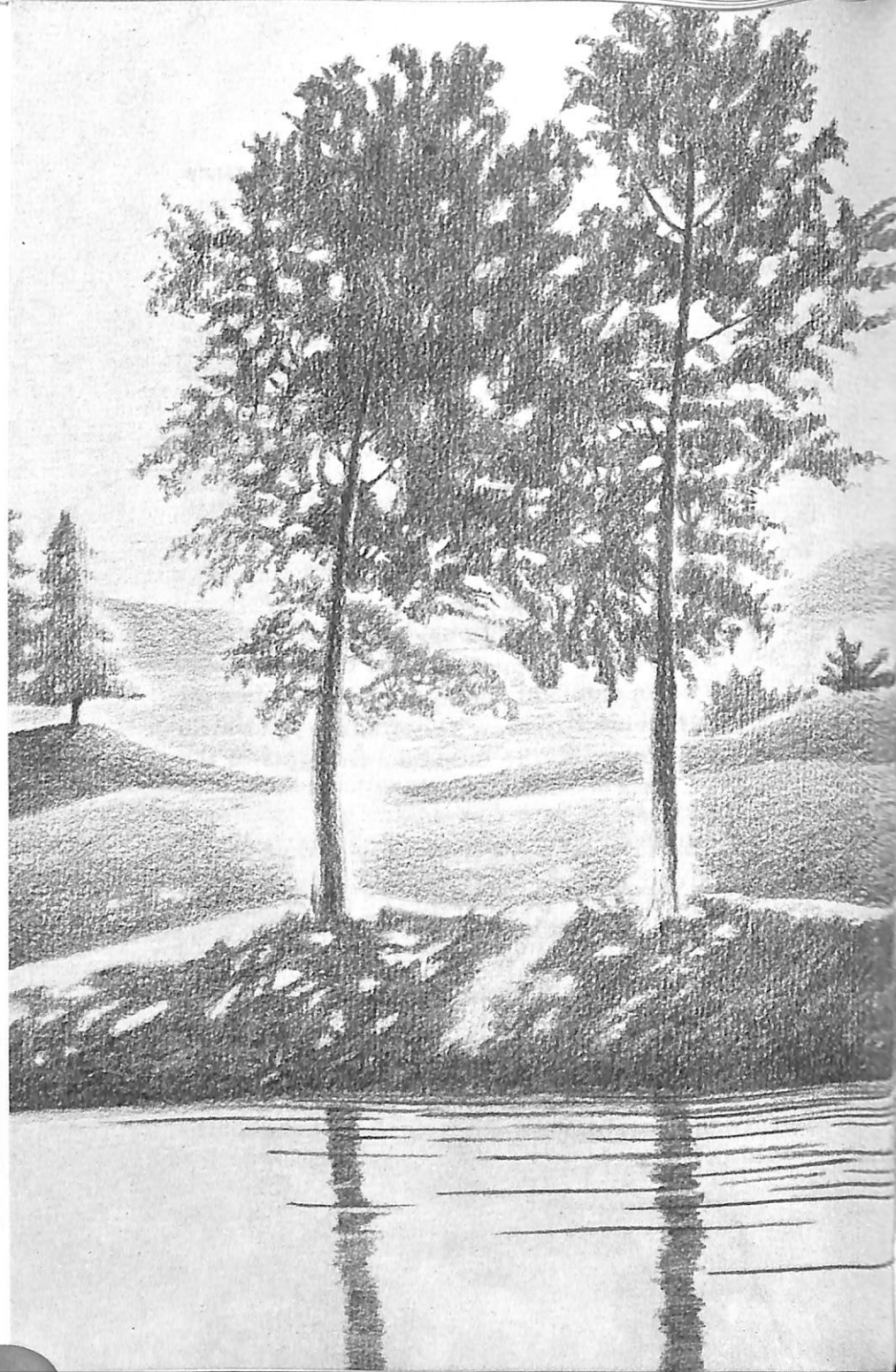
Just as the ocean becomes calm with the subsiding of its waves, in the same manner, when your mind becomes free of worries and doubts, you will attain supreme serenity.

You will become the Emperor of the Kingdom of the Self. Even the great divinities will seek your favor. Your glory and majesty will be boundless.

With the lamp of intuitional knowledge you will become the giver of glory even to the boundless sky. Then just as an elephant cannot be drowned in a pit full of water created by a cow's hoof, so too you will no longer be drowned in the mundane thoughts of the mind.

But for those who are afflicted with the vices of passion, greed, miserliness and vanity, they are easily drowned in the world-process, even as mosquitoes are drowned in a pit full of water made by a cow's hoof.

By depending upon the objects of the world through the subtle desires of the mind, you have brought yourself to a degraded state wherein you seem to be engulfed like worms in the marshes of the world-process.



Just as gold ore is subjected to purification until the pure gold is isolated, in the same manner, subject your mind to the process of meditation, enquiry and practice of dispassion until the Self is realized.

Your intellect should not be attached to any object, any where and at any time. You should be able to renounce all objects of the world knowing them to be illusory. Only then will you attain the intuitive Realization of the Self.

Since even ordinary people continue to exert self-effort until the object of their desire is gained, it goes without saying that sustained effort is needed for the attainment of Self-realization.

When the mind is no longer dependent on any object, when all the desires of the heart have been dispersed like darkness before the rising sun, then one attains the Supreme Abode of *Brahman*. O King, thus should you discover your Essential Nature as *Sat Chit Ananda* (Existence-Knowledge-Bliss Absolute) by rending the veil of ignorance through the force of intuitional knowledge.

Section 59—*King Suraghu Practises Spiritual Enquiry*

Sage Vasistha continued: O Rama, having thus instructed the King, Sage Mandavya returned to his abode. Then taking recourse to a solitary place, the King commenced his spiritual enquiry.

King Suraghu reflected thus: I am neither these mountains nor do they belong to me. I am neither this earth nor does this earth belong to me. This country of Kirata is not myself nor is it mine.

In the same manner, this city, its citizens and all their relatives, all the soldiers, the royal officers and the like, are neither myself nor mine. It is through mental illusion alone that I believe myself to be the King of this country. I have now renounced this mental illusion.

Even this body does not belong to me, nor does it constitute my identity. It is made up of flesh, bones and different limbs, all of which are inert. How can I be identified with them?

The organs of action as well as the senses of perception are also inert in themselves. They do not constitute my real identity, nor do they belong to me. The objects of enjoyment are neither myself nor mine.

The mind is the cause of the miseries of the world, but even this is inert. The intellect and ego are also in the category of inert matter, and cannot bring about any perception without the Light of Consciousness. They do not belong to me, nor do I belong to them.

This individual soul which seems to be the knower and enjoyer of the objects is a mere illusory reflection of the Self in the mental-process. And by

the force of enquiry, it is recognized as an unreal entity. Then after the negation of all these, what is left is the Witnessing Self.

Just as a person who has forgotten that the ring he is looking for is right on his own finger exclaims when he sees it, "I have found it!", in the same way, the Self that has been my real identity had been forgotten due to ignorance, but now I have discovered It. I am myself the Supreme Self. This is indeed the wonder of wonders.

I am the all-pervading reality. I am the support of the divinities such as even Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva. I am the Self of all.

Glory to the Power of Consciousness, which is my Essential Identity. It pervades the thoughts of the mind and yet eludes the grasp of the intellect. It contains within Itself the countless world systems even as a treasure is contained in a chest.

It is endowed with supreme beauty and effulgence. It is devoid of all forms, and yet is the sustainer of all. There is nothing but Pure Consciousness as the only reality.

The conditions of pleasure and pain are illusory. The Self that illumines all conditions is transcendental and untouched. It witnesses the functions of my intellect and creates an illusory identity, "I am a king."

Riding on the chariot of the body, the mind illumined by the Power of Consciousness sports in various ways in this world-process. It runs, struggles, suffers, rejoices, sorrows, dances and grieves. But the Self is ever unaffected.

Lo! I have been awakened from the dream of the world-process. My wrong mentations have terminated by the force of spiritual enquiry. That which was to be seen I have seen. That which was to be attained I have attained.

All the objects of the world are nothing but vibrations of consciousness. That Pure Consciousness am I, transcending the three bodies and the three states of consciousness.

“Do’s” and “Don’ts” do not apply to me. Pleasure and pain do not affect me. I am the all-pervading *Brahman*. In vain did I exist as a dull-witted soul for a long, long time. Now I have discovered my essential nature. I have become free of all illusions. I am abiding in my essential nature. I will no longer enter into the illusion of the world-process. Adorations to Me who am the Non-dual Reality!

Section 60—King Suraghu after Enlightenment

Sage Vasistha said: O Rama, just as Sage Vishwamitra attained *Brahmanhood* by the force of his intense austerity, in the same manner, the King of the *Hemajata* people attained Enlightenment by his self-effort.

After attaining Enlightenment, King Suraghu ruled his kingdom without allowing his mind to be agitated by worries and anxieties. He was like a mountain remaining firm in the midst of a turbulent river.

He stole sublimity from the mountains, and profundity from the oceans. He became the embodiment of goodness and beauty. Shining like the sun beyond the clouds, he transcended the dualities of the world. He was neither cruel nor compassionate, neither intelligent nor dull, neither good nor evil. He could not be described in the terms of the limited concepts of the mind.

Having ruled his kingdom for a long period of time, King Suraghu entered into the state of *Videha Mukti* (Disembodied Liberation). His *Prarabdha Karma* terminated and he discarded his body, even as the pot-ether discards the pot when the latter is broken.

Then devoid of the cloud of the mental-process, he became like the vast sky. Like a river merging in the ocean, or like a ray returning to the effulgent sun, he became one with *Brahman*—the Absolute.

Section 61—*King Suraghu Meets King Parigha*

Sage Vasistha continued: O Rama, may you also attain the same state which was attained by King Suraghu, and having destroyed ignorance by the force of wisdom, become free of grief.

Just as a child who is terrified of darkness becomes free of fear with the advent of light, in the same way, when the mind acquires the light of wisdom it becomes free of all miseries.

Just as a person who has fallen into a deep well becomes free of fear after he takes a firm grip on a strong rope that will lead him to safety, in the same manner, an aspirant who has found a firm grip over the understanding of the Self is no longer afraid of falling into the dark well of the world-process.

Sri Rama asked: O Sage, the mind is as fickle as the feathers of a peacock. Please tell me how this mind can be brought to a state of one-pointedness in order to attain Enlightenment.

Sri Vasistha replied: O Rama, listen to a dialogue that took place when King Suraghu was yet a *Jivan Mukta* (one Liberated in life). It is a spiritual dialogue between King Suraghu and his friend Parigha, and has profound bearing upon the question you have asked.

During the time when King Suraghu ruled over the people of Kirata, Parigha was a king in the country of Parasika. He was a valiant King who subdued his enemies by the might of his arms. Once there was terrible draught in his country, and his subjects began to perish. The King adopted various methods to save his people, but could not succeed. Finally, adopting the life of an ascetic, he renounced his kingdom and, wearing a deerskin, took to a forest where he practised intense austerity.

King Parigha continued to practise various spiritual disciplines in the cave of a mountain. He lived on mere leaves for a long time, and thus came to be known as "Parnada"—"the eater of leaves."

As a result of his sustained practice of austerity for a very long time, his heart became purified. By the Grace of God, he went beyond the pairs of opposites and attained the knowledge of the Self. With his heart overflowing with divine bliss, he began to roam from place to place, until in the course of his wanderings he happened to enter the Kingdom of the Kiratas, where he met his erelong friend King Suraghu. After expressions of joy and mutual greetings, they conversed on spiritual matters.

King Parigha said: O Suraghu, having seen you after a long time, my heart overflows with joy. My mind enjoys the nectar of serenity. Even like you I have attained wisdom. I practised austerity for a very long time, and as a result of Divine Grace I became Enlightened.

Do you, O King, enjoy the Bliss of Liberation? Have you become free of all misery? Do you perform your royal duties with a balanced mind? Are your subjects happy, prosperous and contented?

Like the lustrous rays of the moon, have you filled all the directions with your divine fame? Have you become an abode of spiritual qualities, even like a lake that abounds with lotuses?

Alas, we have been separated for a very long time, but fortunately we have come together once again, like spring that visits a mountain valley.

King Suraghu said: O Sage, the destiny ordained by Divine Will operates like the movement of a snake—too elusive for the human mind. It is indeed a great surprise that we have been brought together by the act of Divine Will. Your very presence has showered nectar in my heart, and I am indeed most blessed.

Section 62—*The Nature of Samadhi*

Sage Vasistha continued: O Rama, these two friends, King Suraghu and King Parigha, lived together for a considerable period of time, and during their companionship, they conversed on various spiritual matters.

One day, desirous of testing the spiritual attainment of his friend Suraghu, King Parigha said: O King, the actions of this world are delightful for a man of wisdom, but are painful for the ignorant. O King, do you practise *Samadhi*, which is the supreme means of ending the misery of the mind and of enjoying the bliss that transcends the pleasures of the senses?

King Suraghu responded: O Sage, the state of *Samadhi* wherein all mental thoughts and desires are transcended is indeed blissful. But tell me, why do you ask whether I practise *Samadhi* or not?

A knower of the Self, whether seated inactive or engaged in action, is ever immersed in *Samadhi*. Having discovered his identity as the Self, how can he ever be distracted in his mind?

The Sage whose mind is enlightened is ever immersed in *Samadhi*, even though performing actions in his daily life. But a person whose mind is not purified, even if he were to stay seated in a lotus pose for a long time, he is not in *Samadhi*, because his mind does not flow to *Brahman*.

O Sage, *Samadhi* does not consist of being seated in a static pose, but rather is that fire which reduces all worldly desires into ashes. With the eradication of all the objects of desire, when the *Chitta* of a Sage becomes fully established in the Self, it is known as *Samadhi*.

The direct, intuitive realization of the Self is called *Samadhi* by the Sages. It is variously described as supreme contentment, fulfillment of all desires, transcendental realization, and cessation of all distractions of the mind.

That intuitive vision which is free of confusion, devoid of egoism, and which does not throw one into the depths of dualities in the form of pleasure and pain, but which is more immutable and firm than the Sumeru mountains, is called *Samadhi*.

That mental-process which is free of all cares, which has attained the fulfillment of all its desires, and

which is free from the illusions of gain and loss, and of accepting objects or rejecting them, is called *Samadhi*.

From the very moment when the mind of a Sage becomes eternally fused with the truth, he enjoys ceaseless *Samadhi* at all times.

Just as the sun does not give up its effulgence at any time, in the same manner, a Sage does not abandon his intuitive vision at any time during his life. Backed up by the impressions of wisdom, his mind continues to effortlessly flow towards *Brahman*.

Just as a river continues to flow towards the ocean without interruption, in the same manner, the intuitive vision in a Sage continues to flow towards *Brahman* uninterruptedly.

Just as time does not stop for a moment or the breeze does not forget its movement, in the same manner, the intellect of a Sage does not forget *Brahman* even for a single moment.

I am ever endowed with spiritual wisdom. I am supremely pure. I am the peaceful Self at all times. I am ever immersed in *Samadhi*. How can my *Samadhi* be interrupted by anything or for any reason?

O Sage, whatever is experienced in this world is nothing but the Non-dual Self. Therefore, speaking from the transcendental point of view, when the very mind has no reality of its own, there is neither *Samadhi* nor mental distraction for me.

O Sage, he whose intellect is free of the perceptions of duality, who is ever balanced in pleasure and pain, who is endowed with equal vision at all times, and who sees the One Self underlying all names and forms, for him there is neither distraction nor one-pointedness of the mind. How, then, can I practise *Samadhi* or stay without *Samadhi*.

Section 63—*Praised by Parigha, King Suraghu Describes His Spiritual State*

King Parigha said: O King, you have indeed realized the highest Truth. Freed of all feverish torments of the world, your mind shines like the lustrous moon overflowing with the nectar of spiritual bliss. Like the ocean that remains unaffected by gusty winds, your mind is free of all distractions; it is boundless and profound.

O Knower of Truth, you appear like the blue sky during winter, devoid of the clouds of egoistic vision. Limitless and eternal, you are ever balanced in pleasure and pain, gain and loss. Free of all attachments, you are established in the realization of One Self underlying all illusory names and forms.

King Suraghu said: O Sage, in this world there is no object which could be desired by us, since this world is illusory for us both. There is nothing to be either accepted or rejected by us.

An emperor who has attained *Liberation* becomes detached from his vast empire. He can be contented with even a small village, because there is nothing desirable or undesirable for him. Greatness or smallness in objects is a mere mental projection.

People praise or condemn objects because of the presence of *Raga* (attachment) in their minds. But for he whose intellect is pure, there is no need to praise or condemn any object. He aspires to attain the Self alone.

There is nothing to be desired in the three worlds—the objects of the senses, wealth, sex, these mountains and forests, the oceans—all are devoid of reality. There is nothing substantial here. The body is constituted of flesh and bones. The external world is formed by earth, wood and rocks. What is there to be desired in this world?

Just as the sun and its light both disappear with the decline of the day, with the cessation of desire, attachment and hatred both come to an end.

In brief, O Friend, if the mind is free of all distractions and is contented with the nectar of the Self, then this is the highest form of attainment. This is the highest form of bliss.

Sage Vasistha said: Thus did Suraghu and Parigha converse on spiritual matters, and having lived together for a while, they went their separate ways in order to perform their different duties. O Rama, you too must abide in this world like the enlightened Kings Suraghu and Parigha.

**Section 64—Methods of Overcoming
the Defects of the Mind**

Sage Vasistha continued: O Rama, he who takes recourse to good association and practises spiritual enquiry acquires the pure intellect which is praised by all Sages and Saints. Just as with the advent of the autumn season the sky becomes free of clouds, the paths become free of mud and other impurities, and the full moon floods the sky with its lustrous light, in the same way, with the advent of intuitional wisdom, the sky of the *Chitta* becomes free of egoistic illusions, impurities such as attachment and hatred are removed, and the heart is filled with the Bliss of the Self.

Such a Sage who is ever immersed in reflecting upon the nature of the Self, who is free of all external and internal attachments, and who enjoys the Bliss of the Self, his mind is never tormented by the afflictions of the world.

Just as a lotus is not affected by the impurities of the lake, in the same way, an Enlightened Sage, although he dwells in the world, continues to bloom unaffected by all the blemishes of the world-process.

Just as a lion is not affected by elephants, in the same manner, he who is endowed with intuitional knowledge is not affected by the miseries of the world.

Just as the trees of the heavenly garden are not entwined by poisonous creepers, in the same manner, the mind of a Sage is not entwined by the desires of enjoying the objects of the world.

He who has ascertained the illusory nature of the world is supremely detached from all its objects; he is not even affected by the death of his near and dear relatives.

Just as dust particles do not taint the sky, egoistic illusions in the form of pride, infatuation, doership, enjoyership and the like do not taint the mind of a Sage.

For the disease of darkness there is no greater remedy than light. So too, for the disease of ignorance there is no greater remedy than the attainment of knowledge acquired by the reflection on the illusory nature of this world.

When a dream is known to be only a dream, then the experiences of pleasure and pain arising in that dream become insignificant. Similarly, when the world is realized to be of the nature of illusion, all one's experiences of pleasure and pain become extinct.

Just as the eyes of fish are not affected by water, in the same way, the intellect of a Sage is not affected by the waters of the world-process.

Those are truly blissful days when the sky of the heart is flooded by the lustrous rays of the Moon of Divine Bliss.

Those are truly joyous actions which arise as ripples in the ocean of bliss and which do not cause the development of egoism, attachment and other mental impurities.

Like the moon overflowing with its internal coolness, the heart of a Sage who has become free of the illusions of the ego overflows with the nectar of spiritual enquiry.

They are indeed real friends who promote the development of *Vairagya* (dispassion) in the heart of a person. Real scriptures are those which enable one to practise enquiry into the nature of the Self. Those days are days of real significance which have assisted a person in performing constant meditation on the Self.

Miserable are those who are not inclined to the path of spiritual enquiry. Fettered by innumerable desires, craving for the trifles of the world, debilitated by age and diseases, heaving with the sighs of grief, carrying heavy loads of misery, wandering in the forest of the world-process, sinking in the marshy lands of sinful Karmas, they live and move in a state of supreme degradation.

Miserable indeed are those who scorn the path that leads to Self-realization. Bound by the ropes of cravings, crushed by the demoniac teeth of attachments, wandering in vain in the vicious circle of birth and death, afflicted with the fever of desires, and whipped by adversities, they exist like oxen yoked to a bullock cart drudging along the muddy roads of the world-process.

By taking recourse to good association, one acquires the boat that will lead him across the ocean of the world-process. An aspirant should not dwell in any place where it is not possible to be in the company of Enlightened Sages and Saints.

In the burning desert of the world-process, an Enlightened Sage is like a shady tree that affords rest and relaxation to weary souls. His inspiring words are like the refreshing leaves of the tree, his goodness is its cooling shade, his smiles are like its fragrant blossoms. Whoever takes rest under this tree, even if for only a short time, he attains supreme rest in the form of Self-realization.

With the help of good association and spiritual enquiry, one must save himself from sinking in the illusions of the world, thus becoming a true friend to his own self.

One must not allow himself to be tormented by numerous sorrows day by day, and to be ever consumed by evil desires. Rather, by taking recourse to dispassion and repeated spiritual effort, he should save his own spirit with great patience and tender care.

When the ego-sense is removed by spiritual enquiry, the fetters of attachment are destroyed and the spirit discovers its essential nature as the Self. With the cessation of the ego-sense, there surges the ocean of fullness. A Sage enjoys the resulting state of *Nirvikalpa Samadhi* (superconsciousness characterized by the freedom from all mentations).

That spiritual experience cannot be described by words; it is to be experienced in one's own heart alone. Like the tasting of sugar, the Divine Bliss is to be experienced within oneself. Then the soul, like salt dissolving in the ocean, blends with the Divine Self and attains that Supreme State of *Brahman* which is beyond all description.

Sections 65 and 66—*The Story of Bhasa and Vilasa*

Sage Vasistha continued: O Rama, this world is like a mere painting on the canvas of consciousness, and it ceases to have its sway over the mind that has been cultured by the teachings of the scriptures. But as long as the sense of "mine-ness" is not removed, this world-process will continue to assert its reality over the wandering soul.

To illustrate this point, I will relate to you the story of two great friends, Bhasa and Vilasa:

On the northern side of the Sahyadri Mountains there is a plateau abounding with picturesque sights of nature. In that land there lived two great Sages who were like Shukra and Brisaspati in their wisdom and asceticism. These two Sages each had a son, Bhasa and Vilasa, who were attached to each other as constant companions.

When Bhasa and Vilasa attained the age of youth, the old Sages departed from their bodies, even as birds depart from their nests. Having lost their

fathers, the two friends were overcome by deep sorrow. Like withering lotuses, their faces became pale and their bodies became afflicted with the fever of grief. Having performed the death rites for their fathers, they bewailed over their miseries, until they swooned due to excessive grief.

Consumed by the fire of grief, these two Brahmins became like dried up trees. They developed intense dispassion towards the objects of the world, and having separated from each other, spent their time practising intense austerities.

Days, months, and years rolled on. After many years, both became old but yet unenlightened, although Bhasa was the wiser of the two. In the course of their wanderings, the two happened to meet again.

Vilasa said: O Beloved Brother, you are the delighter of my heart. You have always been in my mind. Please tell me, where have you spent all this time? Did you ever succeed in your austerities? Have you attained the knowledge of the Self? Are you living happily?

Bhasa, with the intention of helping Vilasa to realize the Self, said: Today I am so fortunate to meet your saintly personality again! O Vilasa, how can anyone live happily in this world that abounds with so much misery?

As long as the Self—the highest object of knowledge—is not known, the desires and longings of the mind will not cease to exist. Consequently, one



Bhasa and Vilasa meet again.

does not attain freedom from the bondage of the world-process. How can anyone be happy as long as the desires of his heart are not severed by the realization of his identity with the Absolute Self?

The miserable tree of the world-process grows in the form of the body, expressing its tender shoots in childhood, becoming decked with shining leaves in youth, and soon abounding with the white flowers of old age. And after death, this tree germinates again, thus repeating the same cycle endlessly.

O Brother, in the absence of the knowledge of the Self, which is the sovereign remedy for the disease of the world-process, one continues to suffer from the miseries of the world through repeated embodiments.

If after death the soul is led by sinful Karmas, it experiences intense sufferings in hellish regions. Then it is born into some lower form of existence such as an animal, bird, or a tree.

And if the soul is endowed with good Karmas, it is led to the heavenly regions. But here too it is deprived of the capacity of performing self-effort to attain Liberation. Then when the wealth of virtue is exhausted, it must incarnate again in the mortal world, and in this way, continues to whirl in the cycle of birth and death.

And even if one attains a human body, it is difficult to be endowed with the aspiration for Self-realization. Attached to the objects of the senses, the

soul abides in the mountainous region of embodiment; and bitten by the snakes of sense-enjoyments and pierced by the thorns of cravings, it continues to tumble from one cave to another.

For a long, long time the soul continues to wander in the dark night of ignorance experiencing the bitter and sweet fruits of Karmas, which contain only a trace of the Bliss of the Self.

Dominated by petty desires, one engages oneself in the performance of petty actions, and thus wastes the opportunity of human embodiment.

The mind in the ignorant is like a wild elephant that has broken the fetters of discrimination, and being passionately attached to the she-elephant of craving, it is devoid of peace and relaxation.

The tongue in a human being is like a restless vulture perched on the tree of the body, and its desire to enjoy tasty foods only increases day by day.

Struck by frost, a lotus withers and becomes soiled and deformed. In the same manner, struck by the frost of old age and soiled by the insults of one's own relatives and servants, a person becomes devoid of beauty and charm.

Just as a swan leaves a lake that is dried up, never to return, in the same manner, when the water of youth is dried up, one's life hastens to renounce the body forever.

The mind in the ignorant continues to tumble into the dark well of the world-process and to sink in the stagnating waters of delusion, where miseries abide like numerous frogs.

With youth as its waves, desire, anger, hatred and fear as its foam, and greed and craving as its whirlpool, the life of the ignorant continues to flow on in vain.

O Friend, such thoughts as, "I have performed this work," "I am doing this work," and "I am going to do that work," serve only as a net to trap the bird of intellect and to keep it in a state of delusion. And just as an intoxicated elephant continues to smash lotuses in a lake, such thoughts as, "This is my friend" and "That is my enemy" continue to injure the tender feelings of the heart.

He who considers the body as the Self continues to accumulate countless miseries, even though his innermost Self is ever detached and unaffected by them.

Tossed by pleasure and pain, pounded by the storm of age and death, a living being continues to drift through this world-process like a dry leaf in a mountain forest.

Sage Vasistha said: O Rama, these two friends lived together and conversed on spiritual matters in this way until they became Liberated.

Section 67—Attachment As the Cause of Bondage

Sage Vasistha continued: O Rama, the ocean that is difficult for an ordinary bird to cross becomes like a pit full of water made by a cow's hoof for the majestic Garuda. In the same manner, the miseries of the world which are like vast oceans for most people are easily crossed by one who is endowed with spiritual knowledge.

Miseries of the world terminate when a person gives up his identity with his physical as well as mental body. Just as a person would behold a crowd from a distance, in the same manner, a Sage beholds his body with a distant objectivity.

Let the body be overcome by various miseries; how can the soul be affected thereby? The Self abides in the chariot of the body, and when the latter is destroyed, the soul is not affected.

Even when the mind is agitated, in what way can the Self be affected? How can a whirlpool affect the vast ocean?

Tell me in what manner is a swan related to the lake in which he sports? Or how are drifting logs related to the river? In fact, there is no relationship. The swan is ever detached from the lake, and the logs are ever detached from the water. In the same manner, the Self is ever detached from the body and mind.

Just as a reflection is not related to its mirror, in the same manner, the body is not related to the *Atman*.

Just as wood, water and stones, even though agitated and beaten, do not suffer misery, in the same manner, the body, which is just a composite of the five elements, does not suffer misery in itself. Misery is projected on it by the mind. It is ignorance which causes the mind to perceive misery in the body.

An ignorant person takes this apparent world to be real, but a wise man, ignoring the apparent world, perceives *Brahman*—the Supreme Self—as the only Reality. Just as a stone, though abiding in water, is detached from the water, in the same way, a wise Sage, though abiding in the world of objects, is devoid of attachment. Because it is the mind that creates attachments to objects, when the mind is inwardly rid of all its attachments, then all external contacts become free of Karmic involvements.

Pure Consciousness alone exists devoid of the knowable objects of the world. Consciousness is never tinged with the taint of duality. The concept that the Self is affected by duality belongs only to the mind overpowered by ignorance.

Though experiencing pleasure and pain in relation to dream objects in a dream, a person is free of them at all times. In the same manner, though experiencing the world in the state of ignorance, one is ever free of the body and all other limitations.

O Rama, the ego-idea is the root-cause of birth, old age, death and numerous miseries in life. He who is free of the ego-idea is indeed Liberated from the world-process.

Just as a crystal or statue that harbors inner cracks is unfit for worship, in the same manner, a mind that harbors attachments is devoid of purity. He whose mind is free of attachments is ever pure and adorable.

When the mind is free of attachments and impurities, a person is Liberated even though existing in the world. But if the mind is attached to objects, even after practising years of austerity, he is bound to the world-process.

Just as a sleeping person, though inactive in his body, experiences various miserable conditions in his dream, in the same manner, overpowered by the illusion of egoism, though essentially devoid of all miseries, the soul continues to wander in the long dream of the world-process.

O Rama, if the *Chitta* is active without harboring attachments within itself, its actions do not create bondage. But if internal attachments remain intact within the depths of the *Chitta*, one remains in the realms of bondage.

When one's mind is attached to his beloved who lives in a distant land, he remains indifferent to the immediate circumstances that surround him—he is

unaware of cold and heat, as well as of the activities around him. In the same manner, he whose mind is free of attachment (and thus absorbed in the Beloved Self), such a person is not touched by virtue and vice accruing from the performance of actions.

O Rama, renounce this attachment to objects which is the cause of all miseries in this world. When attachment is renounced, mind becomes one with the Divine Self even like a river merging in the sea.

Section 68—Characteristics of Attachment and Detachment

Sri Rama asked: O Sage, how does attachment arise? How does it create bondage for a human being? What form of attachment could lead one to Liberation? How can the disease of attachment be cured?

Sage Vasistha replied: O Rama, by reflecting upon the distinction between the body (matter) and the dweller in the body (the spirit), one develops detachment. Due to the lack of discrimination, the spirit and body are mutually identified. The erroneous notion that this body is the Self is the root cause of attachment or *Sanga*, and it is this attachment that has brought about the tree of the world-process.

The Self is infinite, eternal and immutable. It is beyond the limitations of time, space and causation. But overcome by ignorance, an individual soul loses

the awareness of its essential identity with the Absolute Self, and consequently, seeks happiness by running after the objects of the world. This is called attachment which binds the soul to the world-process.

O Rama, this entire visible world is essentially the Self. What is there to be desired or rejected? When this spiritual vision attains its maturity, one becomes Liberated in life and becomes established in detachment.

You should develop the inward conviction: "I am not limited by the ego-sense. I am the Self underlying all names and forms. There is nothing in this world other than the Self. It does not matter to me whether this illusory body enjoys pleasures of the objects or remains deprived of them; I am ever detached from the body." This form of conviction leads one to Liberation.

He who does not brag about renouncing all actions or does not engage himself in actions for the sake of perishable results; he who is ever balanced in gain and loss, success and failure; and he who has renounced the fruits of action because of inward surrender to God—such a person is called *Asam-sakta*, a person of detachment.

Established in the Self, he whose mind is not agitated by elation or grief, who is not overcome by anger or joy—such a person is called detached; he is Liberated in life.

He who renounces all actions and their fruits mentally, not only physically, such a person is endowed with detachment (*Asamsakti*). He performs action in order to inspire others to perform good deeds, but inwardly he is unaffected by actions, and, therefore, in reality he is ever free of all actions.

With the absence of attachment, many auspicious qualities unfold in a human being. But with increasing attachment, all good qualities are obscured, and numerous evils invade a human personality.

Behold the donkey who carries a heavy burden, has his nostrils pierced by a rope, and who, whipped by his cruel master, must continue to drudge along the toilsome road of misery. It is attachment that has brought the spirit to such a deplorable condition.

It is attachment that led some spirits to be confined to one location in the form of trees, and which are subject to the severities of heat and cold. In this form the spirit must continue to endure untold afflictions in silence.

Worms that lie in the pits of the earth and fight for their miserable existence are souls that have been led to their degraded state through attachment.

Birds that dwell in trees and while away their time starving for food and who are injured and wounded by fowlers, are illustrations of the degrading conditions caused by increasing attachment.

Deer in the forest that feed on grass and tender shoots are subjected to the cruel arrows of hunters, and thus injured and afflicted, they meet their end. This is indeed the fruit of attachment.

Led by attachment, souls are born again and again. They rise and fall like the waves in the ocean. They suffer repeatedly from delusion, downfall, physical and mental ailments, separation from dear relatives, loss of objects of desire, frustrations, fears and numerous forms of grief.

O Rama, attachment is of two types: *Vandya* (attachment to the spiritual values of life leading to Self-realization) and *Bandhya* (attachment to material values of life leading to increasing bondage). The former belongs to Sages and Saints, while the latter belongs to the ignorant.

Bandhya Asakti (that which causes bondage) leads one further and further away from the Self. It is intensified by increasing ignorance gathered through numerous embodiments. But *Vandya Asakti* (adorable attachment) aids a person in differentiating the real from the unreal, and leads him to Self-realization wherein the world-process of repeated birth and death comes to an end.

It is the adorable attachment that has led a the soul to attain the glorious status of Lord Vishnu, who is the sustainer of creation and who holds the conch, mace, lotus, and discus in his four hands.

It is due to adorable attachment that some souls shine like the effulgent sun, illumining the horizons by their radiating wisdom. Led by this adorable attachment, souls rise to the state of Cosmic Consciousness, and thus become free from the cycles of birth and death.

Great Gods have attained their greatness due to the development of adorable attachment. It is adorable attachment that has been the secret behind all those who are glorious and great in this universe.

While deplorable attachment reduces one to a state like that of a degraded vulture craving for rotting carcasses of worldly pleasures, adorable attachment leads one to the glory of great divinities.

Just as blazing fire with its leaping tongues devours dry fuel effortlessly, so too does craving arising out of deplorable attachment devour living beings of this world.

Numerous are the waves of the ocean. Numerous too are the grains of sand by the ocean shores. And even more numerous too are those souls that continue to whirl through the cycles of birth and death because of their deplorable attachment.

The mind that has developed attachment for the perishable objects of the world is like dry fuel fit to be consumed in the fires of hell. All that is painful in this world is caused by deplorable attachment alone.

Just as rivers flow into the sea, in the same manner, misery flows into those personalities whose minds are afflicted with attachment. In fact, it is ignorance which has assumed the form of deplorable attachment, and in this way has spread the widespread snares of illusion.

But just as rivers grow into mighty proportions during the rains, in the same manner, all the glorious virtues of the soul begin to swell to great proportions due to adorable attachment. Such adorable attachment is characterized by increasing detachment from the objects of the senses and ever-growing attachment to the Self, the innermost Reality.

O Rama, worldly attachment abiding in the mind is like a burning fire consuming all bodies by subjecting them to untold misery. But the renunciation of all forms of worldly attachment is like nectar that nourishes the bodies of great souls.

Having attained intuitional knowledge as a result of divine attachment, and having destroyed ignorance by renouncing deplorable forms of attachment, a Sage abides in his own Self and is known as a *Jivanmukta*—one who is Liberated in life.



**Section 69—*The Manner in which the Mind
is Reduced to Pure Consciousness***

Sage Vasistha continued: Those who are endowed with knowledge, whether they engage themselves in various activities or not, or whether they live with another (friend, son or relative) or not, their minds are free of all attachments.

O Rama, the mind should not be allowed to be attached to enjoyments, to actions, to the worries of the past, to the objects of the present, to the sky above, nor to the earth below; neither should it be attached to any of the four directions, nor to anything in between the directions.

You should not allow the mind to be attached to any part of the body, whether it be the center between the eyebrows, the palate, the eye-balls, the mouth, or the centers of the *Kundalini*.

See that the mind is not attached to the waking state, the dream state, or to the deep sleep state. Neither should you allow your mind to be attached to *Tamas*, to *Rajas*, or to *Sattwa*.

Do not let your mind be attached to activity or to inactivity. Neither should your mind be attached to the beginning of creation, to the middle of it, or the end of it. Let not attachment develop towards the objects that are far, towards those that are near, or towards those that are in between.

Do not be attached to the objects of the senses, and do not allow your mind to be deluded by their desires. Also do not be attached to the various psychic powers that are attained by Yogic meditations.

With a steady intellect, having become firmly established in the Self, you should exist in the spirit of absolute detachment in the midst of all the objects of the world. In this way you will discover your essential nature—the Self (*Brahman*).

When the soul has discovered its true identity in the form of *Brahman*, it is then forever unaffected by the varying conditions of the world. Just as the sky is unrelated to the clouds, so too, an enlightened Sage is unrelated to the objects of the world.

Having found absolute repose in the Self, a Sage is inwardly free. With his mind reduced to Pure Consciousness due to the absence of attachments, he continues to sustain the burden of the body only until the *Prarabdha Karma* is exhausted. And then with the end of the body, he is not reborn any more; he is merged in his innermost Self—the Absolute.

Section 70—*The Glory of Detachment*

Sage Vasistha continued: O Rama, those who delight in the bliss of detachment, because of the magnanimity of their hearts, are unaffected by the defects and limitations of actions performed in daily life.

During conditions of great misery, such as the loss of a dear son or relative, the loss of wealth, the experience of insult or injury, a Sage may seem to be agitated in the eyes of those around him, but inwardly he is ever immersed in the bliss of detachment. This fact reveals itself through his blooming face even in the midst of surmounting adversity.

How can that great soul by whose blessings others become free of their mental grief suffer from mental torments? Free of attachments, abiding in Pure Consciousness, a Sage is ever untouched by the miseries of the world. And those who come in contact with him too become free of misery.

Though seemingly agitated, a Sage is immutable like a mountain. How can drifting clouds affect the placidity of the sky? Just as the lotus is untouched by water, in the same way, a Sage is untouched by the limitations of the world.

By the Knowledge of the Self a Sage enjoys the Bliss of the Self even when he is not seated in meditation. His experience of inward bliss becomes spontaneous. Once attained, he is called *Swasakta*—attached to the Self. On the contrary, others are attached to the non-self.

As wisdom grows, one becomes increasingly attached to the Self, thereby bringing about increasing detachment from the objects of the world. It is this knowledge of the Self that is the most potent remedy for the illness of attachment to the objects of the world.

When the mind is free of desires for the objects of the world, a Sage enjoys a state of profound peace even in his waking state, which is very much similar to deep sleep. Having attained this state, he is no longer dragged down by the ropes of pleasure and pain.

It is through egoism that the *Chitta* (mind-stuff) receives lashes of sufferings, but when the sense of ego is dissolved by the knowledge of the Self, how can the *Chitta* then be affected by anything in this world? Therefore, a Sage enjoys immense peace at all times.

Though a Sage is beyond all Karmas, yet he continues to perform actions for the well-being of others; and while doing so he is inwardly detached from actions and their fruits.

Just as a child moves his limbs sportively while in the cradle, in the same manner, although a Sage externally engages his body and senses in actions, inwardly he is ever established in the child-like purity of the Self.

Just as during stormy weather, the forests in the mountains are shaken while the mountain remains firm and unaffected, in the same manner, though appearing to be shaken in his outward life, a Sage is ever unaffected in his inward mountain-like consciousness.

Therefore, O Rama, abiding in the changeless nature of the Self, rise beyond the body-idea. And

with the vision of the immutable Self, be like a mountain unaffected by the changing conditions of the world.

In fact, a Sage rises beyond the three states of consciousness of waking, dream and deep sleep. In reality his sleep-like state is indicative of his abiding in the fourth state known as *Turiya*. From the point of view of the world, the pure state of the Self is called the "Fourth State" or *Turiya*, but when the illusion of the world-process has melted away, the Self alone is, and even the concept of the "Fourth State" is dissolved in the blaze of the highest reality.

Having ascended a high mountain, one can look at others with amusement who are down in the valley. In the same manner, having attained *Turiya* Consciousness, a Sage looks at those who are caught in the world-process with a sense of amusement. (He is amazed to see the degradation that people have brought on themselves by the force of ignorance, while in reality they are the Universal Self.)

Having enjoyed the bliss of *Turiya* in life, a Sage attains *Videha Mukti* or disembodied Liberation after death. In *Videha Mukti*, he goes beyond all the concepts of the mind—he goes beyond *Turiya* and is neither blissful nor unblissful (this experience transcends all mental concepts). Just as a piece of salt melts in the ocean, in the same way, he melts in *Brahman*.

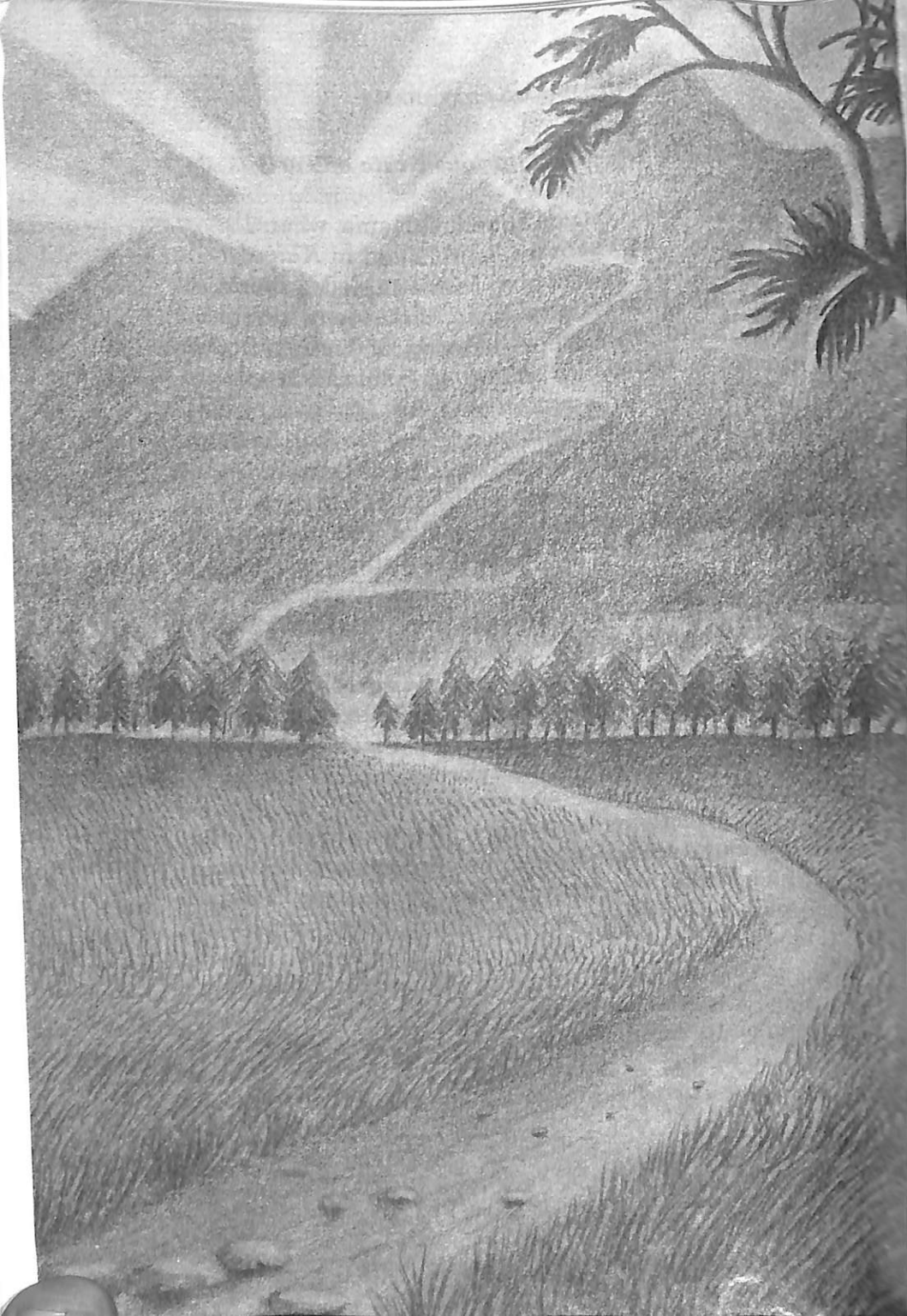
Section 71—*The Glorious State of Turiya*

Sage Vasistha continued: O Rama, when *Turiya* is attained one becomes established in *Kaivalya* or Liberation. A Sage who has attained Liberation during his life is called a *Jivan Mukta* (one Liberated in life), and with the exhaustion of his *Prarabdha Karma*, he attains *Videha Mukti* (Liberation without the body). The state of *Videha Mukti* is called *Turiyatita* (even beyond the state of *Turiya*), because it goes beyond all the concepts of the mind.

Turiya is the Pure State of Consciousness realized by the negation of the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep. Seen from the point of view of the world, *Turiya* is described as the fourth state. However, when every trace of world-consciousness is transcended by a Sage, the same Pure Consciousness is then called *Turiyatita*, meaning "beyond *Turiya*," or "beyond the fourth." In fact, there is no basic difference between these two terms.

Just as flying birds leave no tracks in the sky, so too a Sage attains Liberation through a mystic path which cannot be comprehended by the gross vision of a person.

Drunk with the elixir of Supreme Bliss, a great Sage experiences the state of superconsciousness similar to sleep. And having experienced immense peace during this state, he passes on to the glorious state of *Turiya*, which is beyond the three states of



waking, dream and deep sleep. With the cessation of *Prarabdha Karma*, the same Sage then attains the state known as *Turiyatita*—the Pure Transcendence without the concepts of the four states of waking, dream, deep sleep, and the underlying fourth.

A Yogi must endeavor to attain the state of *Turiya*. Therefore, O Rama, though performing your daily duties, abide in that consciousness similar to deep sleep, and become unaffected even by the great calamities in the form of destruction and death of the body.

Do not ponder over the fact whether the body is subject to destruction or not, but rather assert your essential reality, the Self, which is ever indestructible. You do not depend upon the body, therefore, all questions pertaining to the body are meaningless.

O Gentle Rama, you have understood the Truth that underlies the three states of consciousness. You have also understood the implication of the great utterances of the scriptures that declare the identity of the soul with the Absolute. Therefore, prepare yourself to attain the lofty heights of *Turiya* and *Turiyatita*. Do not afflict your mind with grief.

Having renounced the objects of like and dislike, be lit up with the cooling rays of Divine Bliss. During the state of *Turiya*, your consciousness, which is freed of the darkness of illusion, shines like the cloudless night sky during the full moon.

Just as a Yogi, who, by the practice of meditation, *Japa* and other austerities has attained the *Siddhi* of flying through the sky, does not move along earthly paths, in the same manner, the mind of a Sage that is illumined by knowledge does not stoop to the petty pleasures of the senses.

O Rama, Pure Consciousness is the only essential reality in this entire universe. Therefore, you should not develop the illusion of "this," "that," "I," "you," "the body" and "mine-ness" towards your relatives.

Just as the ocean is nothing but water, in the same way, this world is nothing but *Brahman*. Just as there is not a trace of darkness in the effulgent sun, in the same manner, there is not a trace of duality in *Brahman*.

Body and spirit are mutually contradictory, like light and darkness. How, then, can there be a relationship between the two? It is due to ignorance that the human mind has vainly imagined a relationship between the two.

It is due to a faulty vision that one develops the ideas: "I am happy," "I am miserable," "I am dull," and so forth. If you continue to give reality to these mental illusions, you are paving the way to long-lasting misery.

On the other hand, whether your gaze is turned inwards or outwards, endeavor to assert the reality of the Self underlying all objects. By intensifying the vision of one-ness, you pave the way to eternal bliss.

There is a vast difference between an invincible mountain and an unstable straw, between a hard and impregnable stone and a tender silken thread. In the same manner, there is a vast difference between the body and the Self.

With deeper analysis, the *Pranas* sustain the life of the body, and it is their vibrations that cause the senses to function among the sense-objects. Just as wind blowing through bamboo reeds produces musical sounds, in the same manner, the *Pranas* functioning through the body bring about the perceptions of the objects and become the basis for speech as well.

Even the *Pranas* are nothing but the waves of the *Chitta* (the mind-stuff). In fact, all that is seen in this world exists in the *Chitta*, much like reflections in a mirror.

Like a bird, the *Chitta* abandons one body to go to another according to its *Vasanas* (subtle desires). And wherever *Chitta* goes, it carries with itself the reflection of the Self. Just as the sun radiates its rays, in the same manner, the reflected Self radiates its rays, causing the appearance of the waking and dream states of consciousness.

Men endowed with pure intellect assert that this creation is sustained by ignorance, dullness and the lack of enquiry. It is these which go to constitute the limited human mind. Just as light dispels darkness, in the same manner, the knowledge of the Self renders the *Chitta* non-existent.

Since this world is nothing but a projection of the *Chitta*, it is the *Chitta* that must be enquired into. It is the *Chitta* that is called by different names such as *Jiva* (the individual soul), *Antahkarana* (the internal instruments), *Manas* (the mind), and others according to its different functions.

Due to the predominance of *Pranas* or vital forces, the reflected Self in the *Chitta* is called *Jiva*, and it is the *Jiva* that is bound to the world like an elephant fettered to a chain. With the development of egoism, the *Chitta* assumes the form of *Ahamkara* (the ego-principle). When performing the function of evaluation and affirmation, it is called *Buddhi* (intellect). When engaged in thoughts and imaginations (*Samkalpas*), it is called *Manas*.

Being the cause of the projected *Jivahood*, *Chitta* is called *Prakriti* or Nature. When manifested it is called body. With the preponderance of the aspect of ignorance, it is called *Jada* (inert), while with that of the aspect of knowledge it is called *Chetan* (consciousness). Thus, O Rama, swinging like a pendulum between the luminous Self (the witnessing Light) and ignorance, this apparent *Chitta* assumes various forms such as *Jiva*, *Buddhi*, mind and *Ahamkara*.

O Rama, it is the *Jiva* (the mind sustaining the reflection of the Self) which is the cause of the world-process. It is not the fault of the body; how can this inert body give rise to the experiences of pleasure and pain?

Just as when one leaf in a tree is destroyed, the sap of the tree is not destroyed but flows on through other leaves, in the same manner, even when one body is destroyed, the *Jiva* flows on to other bodies. There is no cause for fear.

Even the possibility of the destruction of the *Chitta* should not be viewed with a sense of pathos. Rather, this destruction is the cherished goal of all aspirants.

When the *Chitta* is destroyed by the force of Self-realization, one discovers oneself as *Brahman*, and the illusory identification with the body terminates. For this very reason, the scriptures describe Liberation as the destruction of the *Chitta*.

Like a monkey that jumps from one tree to another, in association with the *Vasanas* (subtle desires) this *Jiva* continues to leave one body in order to enter another. It is not related to any particular body.

Just as a stepmother with an outward show of affection carries a child to different places according to her whims, in the same manner, the *Vasanas* carry the *Jiva* to different embodiments. And the *Vasanas* retain their existence by obstructing the *Jivas* from discovering their essential nature—the Self.

Endless are the miseries that develop in old age. Even more so are the miseries that are caused by the *Vasanas*, which give rise to an endless series of

hellish conditions for the incarnating souls. Indeed, the illusions created by *Vasanas* are beyond human comprehension.

Section 72—*Grief is Neither in the Body nor in the Self*

Sage Vasistha continued: O Rama, just as there is no relationship between a pot and its pot-ether, in the same manner, there is no relationship between the body and the Self. And just as, with the destruction of the pot, the ether in the pot is not destroyed, so too, with the destruction of the body, the Self is not affected.

This body is ever perishable. But one who believes that with the destruction of his body his spirit will cease to exist is indeed endowed with dullness of intellect.

The horses that drive a chariot are not related to the chariot; the path pilgrims adopt is not related to them; the swamp and the mud of a lake are not related to the lake. So too, the body (the not-self) is not related to the Self.

Just as out of one piece of wood numerous forms of dolls are created, in the same way, out of the five elements numerous bodies have evolved.

Since this body consists of nothing but the five elements, how can there be an occasion for elation or grief, pleasure or pain due to the rise or fall of the

body? He who seeks pleasure through the body of the opposite sex is like a moth meant to be consumed in the fire of passion.

When two stone images embrace each other, there is no sentimental involvement—there is neither attachment nor hatred. In the same manner, the *Chitta* and the body are mutually embraced by each other without a deeper relationship.

Having assumed the form of waves, the ocean goes about gathering straw, weeds, and wood. In the same manner, having assumed the form of the *Chitta*, the Self goes about gathering the body, mind, senses and other forms of the not-self.

And when the same ocean becomes calm, it gives up the gathering of straw, weeds and wood. Similarly, when enlightened by wisdom, the Self gives up its identification with the body and its involvement in the objects. It regains its ocean-like glory.

When intoxication has worn off, a drunkard recovers the memory of his identity. So too, when the veil of ignorance is removed by the knowledge of the Self, one recovers one's spiritual identity as *Brahman*.

O Rama, just as the ocean is not attached to the vast store of pearls and precious materials that lie in its depths, in the same way, a Sage is not attached to the objects of the world, in spite of his apparent contact with the world.

Just as the ocean is not tainted by the impurities along its shores, or the sky is not tainted by its clouds, he who is Enlightened is not tainted by the world-process.

Just as the ocean is not concerned with the waves that have passed on, or the waves that are yet to come, or the waves that are soft and placid, or the waves that are turbulent and muddy, in the same manner, a Sage is not affected by the objects of the world because he sees all objects as the manifestations of the Self.

O Rama, there are two entities in this world, the seer and the seen. Of these two, the seen in itself is neither existent nor non-existent; therefore, it should neither give rise to happiness nor to grief. The seer is Pure *Atman* (the Self), ever unaffected by the defects of the world. Being association-less, it is beyond elation and grief.

That which is unreal should neither cause happiness nor misery. That which is real is beyond happiness and misery. It is impossible to find entities arising out of the blend of the unreal and the real, because such a blend, like the blend of darkness and light, is impossible. Therefore, for a man of reflection there is no room for elation or misery due to the transient conditions of the world.

With an analytical vision one can behold the Bliss of the Self manifesting as pleasure when the senses are in contact with the objects. Such "pleasure"

or "happiness" does not proceed from the objects, but from the ever blissful Self. By thus reflecting, one becomes a liberated Sage, while those who are ignorant continue to intensify their bondage by their erroneous conviction that happiness proceeds from the objects of the world.

While self-indulgence in pleasure intensifies bondage, the self-negating process of discovering the blissful Self removes bondage and promotes release.

O Rama, when the seer becomes free of "seeing" and the "seen," it then abides in its essential nature—the Self. A Sage is then said to be abiding in *Turiya*—the fourth (since it transcends the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep).

The state of *Turiya* is beyond description. Abiding in this state, the Self is neither gross nor subtle, neither associated with objects nor dissociated from them, neither conscious (of objects) nor unconscious (of them).

From the point of view of *Turiya*, the *Atman* (Self) is neither in the form of "ego" nor in the form of "objects," it is neither one nor many, neither near nor far, neither existent nor non-existent. It is neither attainable nor non-attainable, neither finite nor all-pervading, neither of the nature of the elements nor of the nature of the source of elements. (This is because the Self is the only reality from the point of view of *Turiya*, and from that point of view, the reality of the world is utterly negated).

O Rama, the numerous worlds that are experienced by countless souls and which exist through the unimaginable flow of time are nothing but waves surging in the ocean of the Self. Having thus realized the Self, become free of the world-process.

Section 73—Three Types of Ego

Sage Vasistha continued: Just as the knower of the secrets of the *Chintamani* (wish-yielding gem) finds it, in the same manner, a wise aspirant discovers the true nature of the Self by negating the illusions of duality thereby becoming established in the Self.

O Rama, listen to the first type of affirmation that leads to Liberation. Relinquishing the limited notion of the ego-sense, assert within yourself: "I am the gods. I am the numerous worlds. I am the moon and its lustrous rays. I am the clouds, the darkness, the earth, the ocean. I am the wind, rain and fire. I am this entire universe. I am all this."

Or you may practise a second type of affirmation: "I am the essential reality underlying all names and forms. I am the Non-dual Self distinct from the three bodies and the five sheaths. I am the only Reality."

But there is a third type of egoistic assertion which must be shunned in order to attain Liberation. It asserts itself thus, "I am this body. I am of the nature of the world which is ever changing and transient. I am subject to birth and death."

As long as a person is agitated by elation and grief, so long he has not realized the mystic fact that this world is nothing but the Self. For such a person the world continues to be a reality distinct from his spirit, and therefore, he must whirl through the endless cycles of birth and death.

The first two attitudes are born of *Sattwa* or increasing purity of mind. The first attitude expands your consciousness to include all that is by asserting, "I am all this," while the second is the penetrating vision of "I am the underlying Reality behind the illusion of the three states of consciousness (waking, dream and deep sleep) and the three bodies (physical, astral and causal), as well as behind all names and forms." The persistent practice of these two attitudes or affirmations leads to Liberation. But the deep-rooted notion, "I am the body" is the source of all miseries.

An Enlightened Sage, however, goes beyond the three *Gunas*, and therefore, rises above these three attitudes. Abiding in the Self he has no need for even the *Satwic* type of affirmation. But an aspirant must continue to take recourse to the *Satwic* type of affirmation in order to negate the deep-rooted body-idea.

Atman must be realized through direct intuition. Intellectual knowledge of the Self does not constitute Liberation. In intellectual knowledge, one lacks direct experience of the fact, "I am *Brahman*." It is this direct experience that removes ignorance and frees one from the bondage of the world-process.

The idea that this is the Self and this is not the Self has been perpetuated by the Self itself through the functions of *Maya* (Cosmic Illusion). In fact, O Rama, the Self alone exists in the three periods of time, and is self-luminous, perfect, and the ever-shining Reality. The intellect that is attached to the gross objects of the world lacks the transparency to reveal the glory of the Non-dual Self.

Just as still air is put into motion by a fan, in the same manner, with the formation of the astral body,* the ego-sense is brought into existence due to ignorance.

Just as wind is formed with the motion of the air, and human vision becomes effective with the kindling of a lamp, much in the same manner, *Jiva* or individual soul comes into existence with the rising of *Puryashtaka* (the subtle body). Though the Self is the innermost reality in *Puryashtaka*, yet, overpowered by ignorance, the individual soul seeks happiness in the illusory objects of the world, and thus maintains a state of bondage.

Although the rising sun causes various actions to take place upon this earth, it is ever unaffected by whatever happens. In the same manner, although the Self is the basis behind all Karmic involvements of the *Jiva*, yet that Self is ever unaffected by those Karmas.

*The subtle body, known as *Puryashtaka*, consists of the following: 1. The Five Elements, 2. The Five *Pranas*, 3. The Five Senses of Perception, 4. The Five Organs of Action, 5. The Fourfold Mind, 6. *Avidya* (ignorance), 7. *Kama* (desire), and 8. *Karma* (action).

This Self is never born, and therefore, is never subject to death. It is ever full, and thus has no desires or Karmic involvements. This Self is your Inner Identity. That You Are, O Rama!

Just as a person operating a machine himself remains without activity, but through his intelligent association the machine continues to perform various actions, in the same manner, the Self is free of all actions, but due to Its mere presence, the world-process continues to pulsate with numerous activities.

Liberation is neither above in the vast realms of space, nor below in the nether worlds. It is neither on the earth, nor in the heavens. The glorious state of Liberation is in the *Chitta* freed of all illusions.

When an aspirant renounces attachment towards the objects of desire, his mind melts in Pure Consciousness. This is known as Liberation. But as long as intuitional knowledge has not dawned in the pure *Chitta*, so long the *Chitta* will continue to maintain a miserly view of the Self—"I am in bondage and I need to attain Liberation." But when the *Chitta* is supremely purified, it has no desire even for Liberation. It becomes Liberation itself.

Section 74—*Enlightenment Leads to Perfection*

Sage Vasistha continued: O Rama, deluded men suffer the pangs of separation when they do not see the faces of their wives and children. In the same

manner, overpowered by ignorance this Self is unable to behold its own glory, and thus suffers from the illusory world-process.

By sipping alcohol, one is led to crave for alcohol more and more. In the same manner, by developing a sense of egoism, the soul is led to the state of being overpowered by the body-idea, and thus continues to be immersed in attachment, greed, delusion and other expressions of ignorance.

This world-process is like a mirage appearing in the vast expansion of the Self. It floods one's consciousness with the illusory waters of attachment and hatred, good and evil deeds, and enjoyments with their consequent Karmic involvements.

It is Pure Consciousness (*Chit*) tinged with ignorance that assumes the role of *Chitta* (the mind-stuff). *Chitta* in turn gives rise to the *Ahamkara* (the ego-center), which, when reflecting on the objects of the world, assumes the role of *Manas* (mind). In fact, *Chit*, *Chitta*, *Ahamkara*, *Manas*, and *Buddhi* (intellect), as well as the senses, are different expressions of the same Pure Consciousness.

Mind and ego are interdependent. By destroying either of the two, the other is automatically destroyed.

An aspirant must curb even his desire for Liberation with an increasing understanding of the fact that desire for Liberation is meant to shut out all worldly desires, but, in its finality, even this desire must not be allowed to persist, because it would only continue

to feed the flame of the externalized mind. But when this final desire is renounced by the profound revelation, "I am *Brahman*," one attains Liberation in an effortless manner.

It is the lack of spiritual reflection that causes a person to develop such deluded notions as "I am the body" or "My wife and children are mine." It is such notions that become the source of all misery and affliction.

Led by illusion a person believes his body to be the knowing spirit, and he considers the spirit to be involved in actions enjoyments of the world. Such convictions as "I am the enjoyer" and "I am the actor" arise only out of ignorance.

When a person knows the true nature of a mirage, it does not delude him any more. In the same manner, by knowing the true nature of the illusory world-process, one is not deluded by *Vasanas* or subtle desires of the mind.

Endowed with the boundless power of wisdom, a person tears the veil of desire and emerges like a lion who has broken the cage in which he was imprisoned.

When the body-idea, which is the source of the family of desires, is overcome, a person begins to shine like the moon due to the fullness of bliss.

Just as a mountain enjoys coolness bathed in the waters of rains, so one enjoys the coolness of Liberation bathed in the nectarine rains of wisdom.

Just as a pauper becomes immensely delighted having come upon the fortune of becoming a king, so one becomes immensely blissful due to Self-realization.

Just as clouds that have rid themselves of the burden of rains hover like silvery apparels decking the blue sky, so too, when the mind is freed of its worldly desires and is thus unable to cause the rain, thunder and lightning (the miseries) of the world-process, it adorns the expansion of the Self.

The knower of the Self abides in his own Self and becomes supremely peaceful. After having been agitated by wind and having resumed its own nature, a lamp burns serenely. In the same manner, when the wind of *Maya* no longer distracts the mind of a Sage, his spirit resumes its original glory.

Devoid of the mud of desire, freed of the bondage of delusion, and liberated from the pairs of opposites, the spirit of a Sage crosses the ocean of the world-process and becomes absolutely free.

The attainment of a Sage is coveted by the whole world, while the Sage himself does not covet anything. His qualities are admired by all, but he admires nothing.

The knower of the Self gives nothing, receives nothing, nor does he praise or condemn anyone. His spiritual vision neither rises nor sets. He is neither subject to elation nor to grief.

O Rama, the joy experienced when desires have become extinct cannot be compared with any worldly pleasure known to the mind. Even the joy experienced by one in the sweet embrace of a beloved falls far short of the perpetual bliss experienced by a Sage.

Neither a kingdom, nor the heavenly realms, nor the moon, nor the spring season, nor any pleasure of the world can ever compare to the bliss that is experienced by desirelessness.

O Rama, it is desirelessness that gives rise to the bliss of Liberation, before which the pleasures of the three worlds become as insignificant as a straw.

For the great soul who is endowed with desirelessness, this earth becomes as small as a pit made by a cow's hoof, the Sumeru Mountains turn into stumps of trees, and the three worlds become like dust particles drifting in the wind.

For those who are desireless, all worldly transactions—giving and taking of gifts, accumulation and protection of wealth, enjoyment of the pleasures of the senses, delighting in the presence of relatives and friends—all become meaningless. So much effort is directed by the ignorant towards these activities, and yet by doing so, they only continue to sow the seeds of misery.

O Rama, who can describe the glory of a Sage who possesses a heart incapable of harboring any worldly desire?

In fact, desires do not exist in you, nor are you related to them. Know desires to be as illusory as the motion seen in trees and other objects from a racing chariot.

Do not depend upon the desires of the world. They act as thieves to rob you of the intuitive knowledge of the Self.

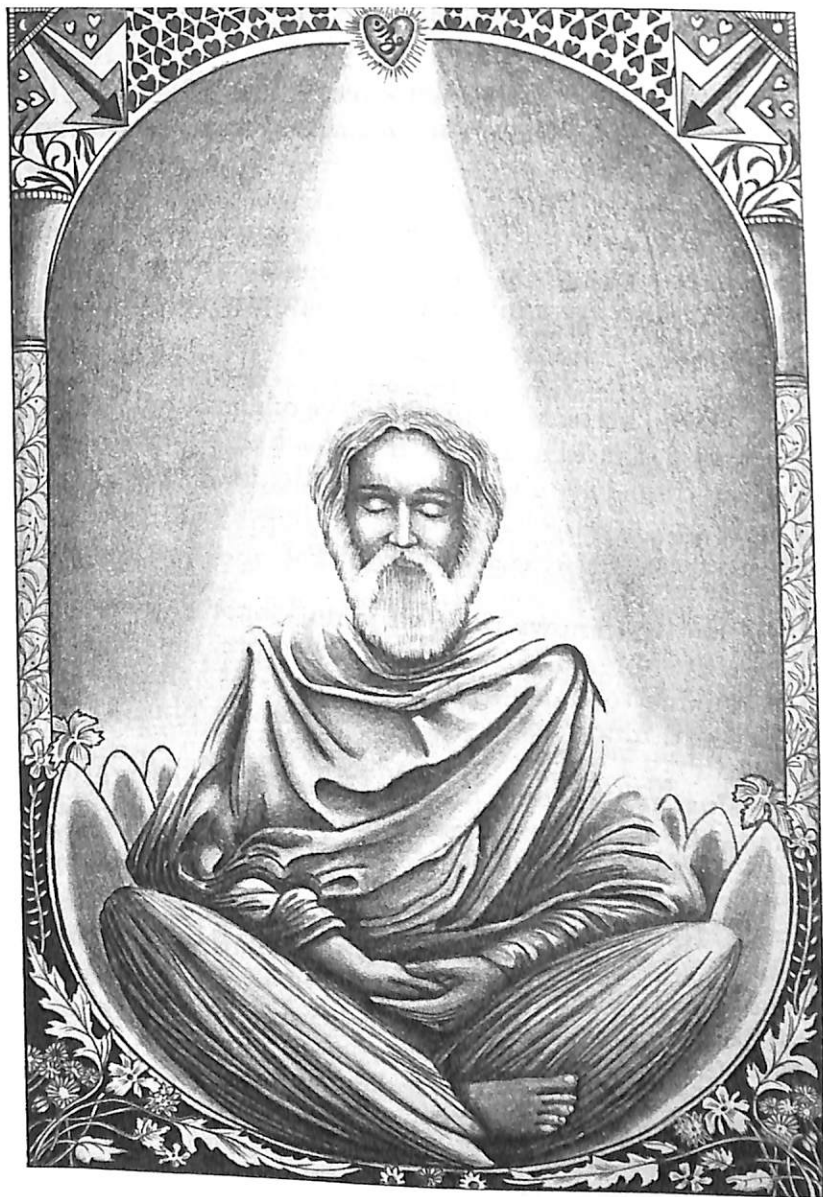
Just as insects and worms are crushed and ground by the wheels of a chariot, in the same manner, overcome by desires the *Jivas* are, as it were, crushed and powdered under the wheels of the world-process.

O Rama, a knower of the Self does not desire anything from this world which is illusory. There is no object of this world which could be truly desirable. How can any portion of mirage be valuable to a person who is thirsty?

He who knows the illusoriness of objects and the reality of the Self attains the supreme state of repose characterized by the cessation of all desires.

A deer flees in haste when it sees a lion approaching from a distance. Much in the same way, *Maya* flees from the person who is endowed with the heroic quality of shunning all desires because he knows them to be illusory.

Endowed with the spiritual strength of a pure intellect, a Sage views the objects of pleasure as lifeless paintings on a screen. Even a most charming



Cupid's arrows converted into fragments before a Sage.

lady, the very personification of youth and beauty, is viewed by him as a statue of stone seen in the ruins of ancient cities.

Just as wind is unable to produce pleasure or pain for a mountain, in the same manner, the objects of the world are unable to cause agitation in the heart of a Sage.

Even in the most provocative of conditions, such as when Cupid's arrows are discharged against a Sage, they become converted into tiny fragments. How can the swirling mist of passion affect the boundless vastness of the blue sky?

He who knows the Self is no longer dependent upon the objects of the world. Therefore, the objects are unable to cause even tiny ripples of agitation in his heart, much less can they overpower him.

Just as a traveller does not seek refuge in the arid lands of a desert, in the same manner, a Sage does not seek refuge in the illusory objects of the world.

O Rama, though seeing various objects, the eyes continue to remain detached from them. In the same manner, although in the presence of various objects of the world, the mind of a Sage remains detached from them.

The surging waves of the ocean do not agitate a mountain standing by its shore. In the same manner, he who has discovered the mystic path of *Brahman* is not agitated by the waves of pleasure and pain.

Even as *Hiranyagarbha* (the Cosmic Mind) gives rise to numerous worlds and yet remains unagitated, so a Sage remains unaffected in spite of his apparent involvement in various actions.

Although a piece of gold is apparently tainted by mud, it is inwardly unaffected in its quality. In the same manner, although outwardly involved in actions, a Sage is inwardly unaffected in his spiritual consciousness.

Just as one who has recognized a dear relative does not forget him, so too, having discovered the Beloved Self, one does not allow the knowledge to be forgotten.

Just as the water that has been trickling down a rock dries up when the rains are over, so too, with the removal of ignorance the desires of the heart no longer flow towards the objects of the world.

Just as a fruit that has been removed from the branch of a tree cannot be reunited with the tree, so too, the spirit that has become Liberated—torn from the tree of the world-process—cannot be brought back again to its previous state of bondage.

O Rama, a lady who is attached to her paramour will continue to remember him with fondness even though she may be engaged in the various works of her household. In the same manner, the mind of a Sage continues to enjoy the Bliss of *Brahman* at all times.

Tell me, O Rama, is there anyone so mighty and strong that he can force his wife to forget the one whom she loves in the secrecy of her heart? In the same manner, there is no force on earth that can compel a Sage to forget the blissful experience of the Self.

Just as nectar from different flowers becomes one in the form of honey, in the same way, the joys arising out of different objects of the world are unified in the Bliss of *Brahman*. He who has tasted the Bliss of *Brahman* does not need to turn to the pleasures of the senses.

Established in the Self, a Sage, though afflicted and tortured in the world, is inwardly unaffected. Though seeing his body perish, he remains united with the Imperishable Self.

Led by *Prarabdha*, a Sage may encounter prosperous or adverse conditions in his life; he may be led to beautiful gardens or to forests abounding with thorns; he may be given palaces or thrown into terrible dungeons. Whatever his condition, he is ever unaffected by sorrow, pleasure or pain.

Section 75—*Examples of Liberated Sages*

Sage Vasistha continued: O Rama, performing his duties as a king, King Janaka continued to be free of all mental anxieties because of his spiritual Enlightenment.

Your grandfather, King Dilipa, ruled his kingdom for a long time as an enlightened Sage. Though externally he continued to perform his various duties, he too was internally free of all attachments.

King Manu, devoid of the taints of attachment and hatred, also ruled over his subjects for a long time as an enlightened Sage.

King Mandhata, though engaged in many battles against his enemies for the sake of protecting his kingdom, was an enlightened Sage. He was inwardly ever established in the non-dual Self.

Abiding in the world of *Patala* (nether-world), King Bali performs his duties diligently, but internally is ever established in the actionless Self.

King Namuchi, though a demon by birth, had attained Enlightenment. He maintained his mental placidity even during the great wars he had to wage against the gods.

King Prahlada, though belonging to the race of the demons, attained supreme devotion and became free of the bondage of the world-process.

Among Gods, Brihaspati, the preceptor of Gods, is ever established in his Self. And Shukracharya, because of his inward Enlightenment, continues to perform his duty as the preceptor of the demon race in a detached manner.

Ever engaged in sustaining and protecting creation, Lord Vishnu is ever detached from all pairs of opposites. He abides in *Brahman*.

Outwardly Lord Shiva is ever united with Uma, but in reality he is one with *Brahman*, and Goddess Uma is the very embodiment of Divine Knowledge.

Sage Narada continues to wander through the fourteen worlds praising the glory of the Divine Self. But because of his Enlightenment, he is ever free from the world-process.

This Sage Vishwamitra, who is in our midst, is Self-realized; yet he continues to perform various sacrifices as enjoined in the *Vedas*.

Liberated Sages are found among kings such as Janaka, Sharyatin, Mandhata and Sagara. They are seen among gods such as Brihaspati, Shukracharya, the deities of the sun and moon and the seven divine Sages presiding over the seven stars that circle the Pole Star.

Liberated Sages arise even from the world of animals and birds. On the other hand, ignorant beings exist even among gods and other celestial beings.

O Rama, after Enlightenment, one is never born again. It is only when the Self is not realized that one continues to take on embodiments in this world.

Those who are endowed with intuitive knowledge perceive *Brahman* as the Reality behind the illusory projection of the world-process. Thus realizing, they become free.

Endowed with *Viveka* and *Vairagya*, Sages see no difference between a clod of earth and a piece of gold. They are established in equal vision.

When the spirit in man becomes absolutely detached from the objects of the world, it enjoys Liberation. He who is attached to the objects of the world is in the state of bondage.

O Rama, endowed with serenity, self-control and other spiritual qualities, you must ascend the ladder of wisdom step by step. By sustained self-effort in following the path shown by the scriptures and the Sages, you will cross the ocean of the world-process. But those who are devoid of this form of self-effort are unable to cross even small pits made by the hooves of cows.

Endowed with immense patience, with a sustained self-effort, you must take recourse to the practice of enquiry and reflection on the nature of the Self. Your spiritual practice must continue in an unbroken succession until the Self is realized. Then this whole world will become as insignificant as a little water that has gathered in the pit made by a cow's hoof.

Section 76—Crossing the Ocean of the World-Process

Sage Vasistha continued: O Rama, this world proceeds from ignorance that obscures the nature of the Divine Self. But by the exercise of knowledge, this world disappears like mist before the rising sun.

The worlds that proceed from *Brahman* are countless. Who can count the dust particles that scintillate in a beam of light proceeding from the sun? Suppose every dust particle were a world-system. Such would convey the countless worlds sustained by *Brahman*.

The world-process is like a terrible ocean that is difficult to cross. But if those who are endowed with self-effort are guided by scriptural teachings, they are able to cross it easily.

This ocean of the world-process surges with the waters of illusion. Births and deaths are numerous waves that rise and fall. Cravings are the restless ripples. Virtuous deeds shine as foam, while hellish sufferings are like its hot currents.

Human mind is like a whale, and various mentations are like different aquatic creatures. This ocean abounds with the pearls of sense-enjoyments, and is infested with the serpents of misery and disease.

The lures of sex and passion are various picturesque phenomena that arise in the ocean, and those who fall into these lures are unable to cross this terrible ocean.

Captained by the intuitive intellect, *Prajna* or wisdom is the great ship that takes one across the ocean of the world-process. But those who do not take recourse to this ship are indeed dull-witted.

O Rama, having enquired into the nature of the Self under the guidance of liberated Sages, you must discover the illusoriness of the world and the reality of *Brahman*. Then this ocean becomes a source of great joy, existing only for divine sport.

O Rama, in the beginning one must subdue the senses by the force of dispassion, but after Enlightenment the movement of the senses in objects needs no restriction, because they are guided by intuitive intellect. They are no longer under the domination of the unenlightened ego.

In one who attains spiritual knowledge, intellect and spiritual effulgence continue to increase in the same manner as beauty and fragrance continue to increase in the spring season.

**Section 77—*A Garland of Heavenly Virtues
that Adorn a Sage***

Sri Rama asked: O Sage, please describe to me the glorious qualities of the Sages who have attained Enlightenment. Though I have already heard your gracious words on this theme, yet I would like to hear more and more about it. The thirst of my mind is never quenched in drinking the nectarine words of your wisdom.

Sri Vasistha said: O Rama, I will again explain to you those glorious qualities which adorn a Sage, even *like a garland of heavenly flowers*. He who has cast out of his mind all the subtle desires for the objects of the world experiences a sleep-like state of inner serenity even while performing actions in the world.

He who has attained the knowledge of the Self possesses a mind that is steeped in bliss. The entire world becomes an ocean of bliss in which a Sage continues to sport.

Though perceiving the objects of the world with the help of the senses—seeing with the eyes, accepting objects with the hands—a Sage neither sees them nor accepts them, because in his inward vision he finds the objects as manifestations of *Brahman* alone.

Abiding in the vision of the immutable Self, a Sage perceives the world as a painted picture on the canvas of consciousness. All worldly activities appear to him like the actions of a wooden puppet—though appearing to be involved in actions, the spirit is ever untouched and unaffected.

A knower of the Self does not expect anything in future, nor does he become attached to any object in the present, nor does he indulge in the memories of the past. Though apparently accepting the changes caused by time, he is, in reality, ever established in the timeless *Brahman*.

Though seemingly asleep to the realities of the world, a Sage is, in fact, ever awake to the reality of

the Self. But the ignorant are ever asleep in the night of illusion, though seemingly awake to their practical realities of life, which are illusory.

For an enlightened Sage, all objects are perceived as the Self. Therefore, though apparently associated with the objects of the world, a Sage is ever free from desires and attachments.

Led by his *Prarabdha Karma*, a Sage continues to perform his duties in daily life, but neither does he like a desired development nor does he dislike an undesired development. He is beyond love and hate, and neither rejoices nor grieves over the objects of the world.

Among children he acts like a child, among the old he behaves like an old man, among heroes he expresses heroic qualities, among the youthful he acts as a youth, and among the miserable he behaves like one afflicted with misery. Although outwardly he acts in different ways, inwardly he is ever established in the Self.

Though apparently agreeable towards his devotees and disagreeable towards his enemies, a Sage is inwardly beyond the concepts of friend and foe. He is ever established in the Self.

A knower of the Self does not indulge in vain talks about worldly matters. He employs his speech in glorifying the Self, or in explaining the secrets of

the scriptures. His heart is never afflicted with the pettiness of egoistic vision. Ever beaming with bliss, he becomes a towering source of inspiration for others.

Ever cheerful and sweet in disposition, ever enveloped in the radiance of his own glory, he is friendly towards all living beings and is untouched by grief or sorrow.

He is ever serene, compassionate, generous and magnanimous. He is the ocean of equanimity. His cooling touch alleviates the scorching misery of the world-process. He shines like the lustrous moon, overflowing with the nectar of wisdom.

All his desires are fulfilled. He has nothing to gain by performing good Karmas, nor has he anything to lose by performing negative Karmas. He is beyond good and evil. No purpose of his can be served by gaining friends, nor has he anything to lose by inimical personalities.

He no longer depends upon the performance or non-performance of Karmas, nor is he subject to bondage or release, nor does he expect heaven or hell as the goal of his journey. He has reached the end of life's journey. He has attained the Self.

Having realized the Self, his mind is neither constricted by the experiences of pleasure and pain that alternate in life, nor elated by the prospect of Liberation.

Chitta (mind-stuff) in most people is like a bird trapped in the net of doubts and distractions. In the case of a Sage, however, the fire of knowledge has destroyed the net of doubts and distractions, and freed of its bondage, it flies into the boundless expansions of the Self. How can such a mind of the Sage entertain petty thoughts for the perishable objects of the world?

Freed of all illusions, his mind becomes one with *Brahman*. He becomes like the sky that cannot be affected by the forming and dissipating clouds of the world-process. His vision neither rises nor sets like the sun.

Just as a child sleeping peacefully in a cradle moves its limbs only as an expression of its overflowing contentment, in the same manner, a Sage engages his body in action as an expression of his inner bliss.

A Sage who has destroyed the possibility of embodiment is ever immersed in the ocean of bliss. Drunk as it were with the intoxicating nectar of immortality, he is no longer concerned with actions that have been performed or with actions that have not been performed.

He moves in the world with a child-like simplicity. Although he seems to accept the objects of the world, he is actually totally detached from them.

He is neither involved in avoiding conditions of adversity, nor concerned with promoting conditions of prosperity. He does not rejoice at the success of his activities, nor does he grieve at their failure.

The sun may turn cool, and the moon may emit scorching heat, and the flames of fire may burn downwards, but the mind of a Sage is not agitated by any sense of wonder. Having realized the Self, who is the wonder of wonders, a Sage is not affected by the happenings of the illusory world.

A Sage does not cultivate the virtues of compassion or humility (these emanate from him like fragrance from a flower), nor does he allow cruelty to abide in his personality. He neither experiences shame nor shamelessness at any time.

Just as rice does not grow in the sky, anger, hatred and other impurities do not grow in the mind which has become expansive like the winter sky.

Where is pleasure or pain in a world that is illusory and transient? Where are the surging waves in a mirage? They are non-existent. Thus knowing, a Sage is ever established in the Self.

Having developed the magnanimous vision, "I am myself the creator of the world because I am the Self," a Sage does not allow his mind to be afflicted by the numerous objects of this world.

Just as different dream creations appear and disappear at short intervals in the mind of a person

who is sleeping at night, in the same manner, various conditions and circumstances in the world appear and disappear during the sleep of ignorance. For a Sage who is awake all these become illusory.

When the mind neither strives for pleasure nor for removing pain, when it is no longer influenced by the concepts of good and evil, it melts into *Brahman*, even like a glacier melting into the sea.

Just as oil cannot be extracted from burnt up sesame seeds, in the same way, illusion does not arise from those Karmas that are burnt up by the fire of wisdom.

Ever contented within the Self, ever immersed in the bliss of the Self, a Sage perceives the experiences of dream and waking as clouds of illusion drifting in the sky of consciousness. Therefore, he enjoys the boundless peace of the mystic sleep wherein the three states of consciousness are negated and transcended.

Section 78—*The Methods of Destroying the Chitta*

Sage Vasistha said: O Rama, this world-process is like the illusory circle created by the whirling of a fire-brand. It is the motion of the *Chitta* that brings about the appearance of the world-process. If the *Chitta* were to be stopped, this world-process would cease to exist.

Sri Rama asked: O Sage, what causes the *Chitta* to be in a state of motion, and what should be done in order to stop its motion? How am I to render my *Chitta* free of all vibrations and oscillations?

Sage Vasistha replied: O Rama, like the snow and its whiteness, or like the sesame seed and its oily nature, or like a flower and its fragrance, the *Chitta* is inseparably related to its vibrations (*Spandana*). If its vibrations were stopped, the *Chitta* would become Pure Consciousness (*Chit*). Conversely, if *Chitta* were controlled, the vibrations would be restricted. Since *Chitta* and its vibration go together, by controlling any of these two, both are negated.

This being the case, the scriptures have enjoined two methods for the destruction of the *Chitta*: Yoga (strictly defined), which consists in controlling the thought-waves of the *Chitta* through the practice of mastering the *Pranas* and their fluctuations, and Jnana (strictly defined), which consists of enlightening the *Chitta* through the practice of listening, reflection and meditation on the Self.

Sri Rama asked: O Sage, how does a Yogi control *Prana* and *Apana* in order to experience the boundless bliss of spiritual peace?

Sage Vasistha explained: O Rama, just as water flows through a thousand channels, in the same manner, the *Pranas* flow through thousands of *Nadis* (vital channels) and thus sustain the health and vitality of the physical body. These *Nadis* also function as the vehicles for the thoughts of the mind.

If the *Pranas* stop vibrating, the *Chitta* will be devoid of thoughts, and therefore, would become *Chit* (Pure Consciousness). It is this vibration of the *Pranas* that sustain the existence of the illusory *Chitta*. Therefore, Sages have enjoined the practice of mastering the *Pranas* in order to control the vibrations of the mind. By doing so, the world, which is nothing but a projection of the mind, ceases to exist (it merges in *Brahman*).

O Rama, the most potent methods of controlling the *Pranas* are the study of scriptures, association with Enlightened Sages, development of *Vairagya* and the practice of the various limbs of Yoga (*Yama*, *Niyama* and others).

Meditation must be practised on any object of one's choice. Choose any object that delights the mind, and direct the mind to that object again and again. This leads to the control over the fluctuations of the *Pranas*.

By chanting *Om* loudly, and then meditating upon the mystic *Turiya* that is indicated by the unspoken sound of *Om*, a Yogi withdraws his mind from the world and attains absolute control over the *Pranas*.

The *Pranas* are also controlled by taking recourse to the practice of *Rechaka* (exhalation), *Puraka* (inhalation) and the *Kumbhaka* (retention) methods of *Pranayama*.

When *Rechaka* is perfected by constant practice, a Yogi experiences the disappearance of the *Pranic* fluctuations within himself. This state is likened to the sky freed of drifting clouds.

When *Puraka* is perfected, the *Nadis* become flooded with *Pranas*, and thus, due to their fullness the *Pranas* stop their vibrations. It is likened to the gathering clouds on the summits of the high mountains.

When *Kumbhaka* is perfected, a Yogi stops the vibrations of the *Pranas* by his mere will. He then directs the concentrated flow of *Prana* to *Vishuddhi Chakra* (the throat center), to the *Ajna Chakra* (between the eye-brows), and finally to the *Sahasrara Chakra* (the crown of the head).

When the *Sahasrara Chakra* is flooded with *Prana*, there develops an experience which is likened to the drinking of nectar. A Yogi thus drinks the mystic nectar that flows from the crown of his head. Some Yogis practise *Khechari Mudra* in order to cause the *Pranic* concentration to flow into the *Sahasrara Chakra*.

Some Yogis practise concentration at the space outside the nostrils as they watch the outgoing breath merge in the *Akasha* at a distance of twelve fingers from the nostrils. By doing so, they bring about the cessation of mental vibrations.

When the mystic *Prana* preponderates the crown of the head (where the mystic hole of *Brahman*

abides), a Yogi attains *Samadhi*. With his intellect born of *Samadhi*, he tears the veil of ignorance and attains Self-realization.

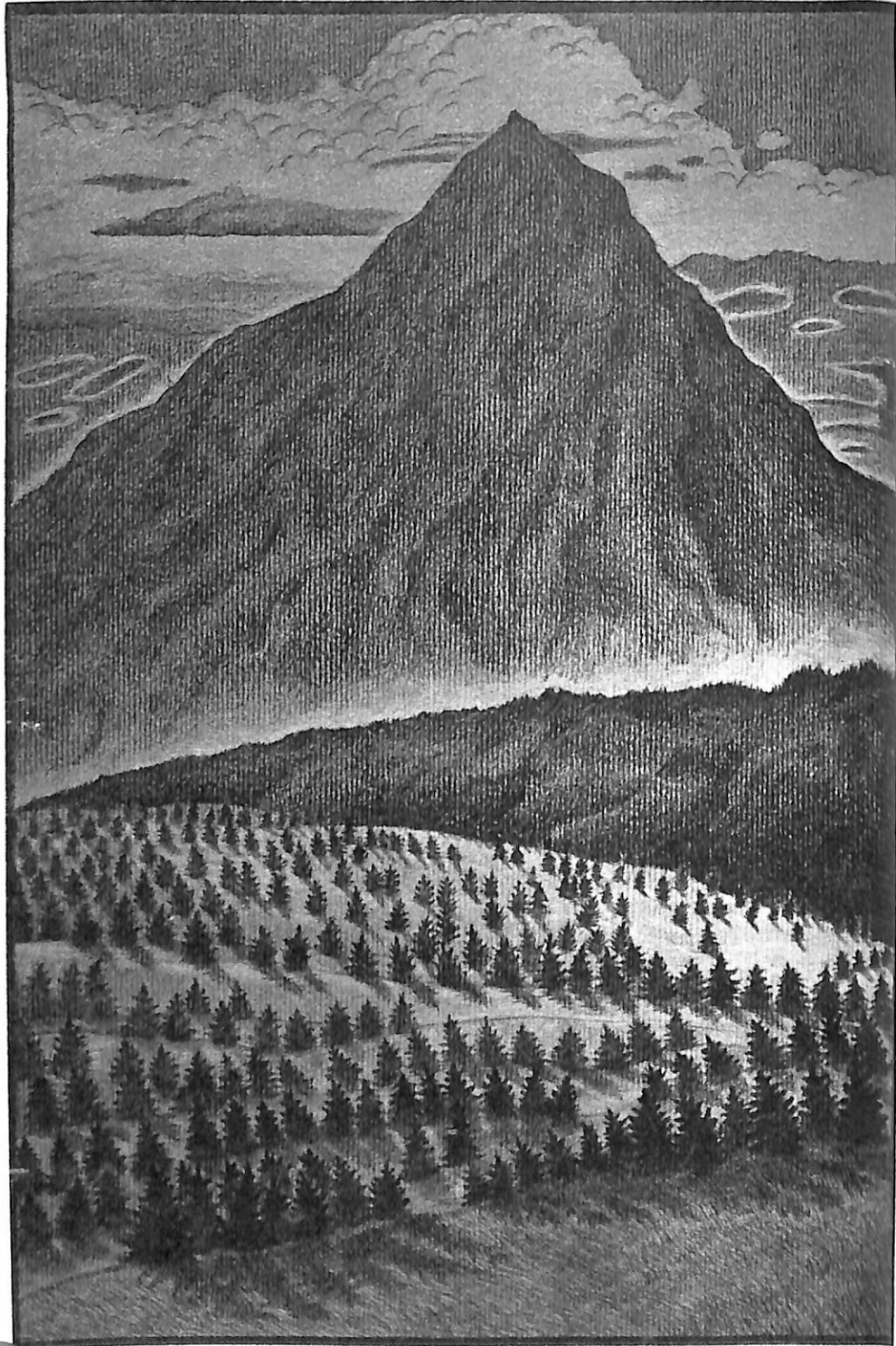
O Rama, by meditating upon the ether of the heart for a long time, a Yogi destroys the subtle desires of the mind, and thus, brings about the control of the mind as well as the *Pranas*.

Sri Rama asked: O Sage, what is the nature of the "heart?" Does the heart refer to the physical heart, to the mind, or to the Self?

Sage Vasistha explained: O Rama, living beings are endowed with two types of hearts—one is to be negated and the other to be accepted. The heart that refers to the body and mind is to be negated, while the heart that refers to the Self must be discovered and realized.

The *Atman* is the "heart" of all that exists. Since the *Atman* abides in the heart (since the mental-process is deeply involved with the organ of the heart), the *Atman* is called the heart. This *Atman* is the reality that penetrates the world both internally and externally.

All the worlds abide in the "heart." It is the boundless treasure of all that is good and beautiful. This is indeed the real heart in a person and not the physical organ consisting of flesh and blood. By meditating upon this "heart," a Yogi brings about the cessation of the *Pranas* as well as the *Chitta*.



Just as water descending from a waterfall disappears from one's sight, in the same manner, the *Pranas* disappear from one's view by the constant practice of *Pranayama*.

Lower *Samadhis* cause mental distractions by giving rise to various psychic powers. However, those who are endowed with dispassion hastily pass through the lower *Samadhis* and attain the highest *Samadhi* wherein they become established in the Self.

O Rama, take recourse to constant *Abhyasa* (repeated practice) in order to attain success in Yoga. May you thus sport in the Self, abide in the Self, and be free of all sorrows.

Associated with the *Vasanas*, the mind accepts the idea of the body, and through identification with the body it accepts the idea of the *Pranas*. But when the mind becomes free of *Vasanas*, it accepts the reality of *Brahman* and becomes Liberated.

When the spirit in a person is freed of the projections of the mind, it attains its transcendental nature which is beyond human imaginations. He attains That from which this world has proceeded, by which this world is sustained, and which is the reality behind all names and forms. Such a Sage is called a *Jivanmukta*—one Liberated in life.

O Rama, he from whose heart all desires for the objects of the world have dispersed, and all likes and dislikes have fled, he is the best among all; he is indeed the very embodiment of Lord Narayana.

Section 79—Destruction of the Chitta through Wisdom

Sri Rama asked: O Sage, you have graciously explained the Yogic method of destroying the mind. Now please explain the method adopted on the Path of Wisdom for achieving the same purpose.

Sage Vasistha said: O Rama, wisdom consists of a unique and deep-rooted conviction that this world is nothing but a reflection of the Supreme Self, Who is without beginning or end, and Who is the only reality.

O Rama, due to the absence of knowledge pertaining to the Self, one enters into the bondage of the world-process, and by acquiring the knowledge of the Self, one attains release from it. By the force of illusion, one sees a snake in a rope and becomes a prey to fear, but by the discovery that the rope alone is real and the snake is an illusory appearance, one attains freedom from that fear. The same applies to bondage and to Liberation.

When the innermost consciousness is freed of all impurities, it is called the Supreme Self, and when the Supreme Self is not known due to the presence of impurities, there appears the veil of ignorance which projects the world-process.

It is the *Atman* assuming the role of an individual subject that knows the *Atman* appearing as the world-process. In fact, there is no difference between the seer and the seen. He who knows the Self, for him nothing exists other than the Self.

From the point of view of *Atman*, there is neither bondage nor Liberation. But viewed from the mind conditioned by ignorance, the soul must attain Liberation from the bondage of the world-process.

O Rama, do not be identified with the thoughts and desires of the mind. Discover your essential nature as *Brahman*. This world is nothing but a magic show created by the great magician *Brahman*.

When a Yogi enfolds the pure *Atman* in his consciousness, he is no longer drawn towards the pleasures of the senses. Just as a soft breeze is unable to pierce impregnable rocks of mountains, in the same way, the subtle enemies in the form of anger, greed and lust are unable to affect one who is Enlightened.

Just as fish that swim in shallow waters are easily swallowed by cranes and other water birds, in the same manner, those who abide in the shallow desires for the objects of the world are easily engulfed by numerous miseries.

Having viewed the world as *Atman*, discover the fact that *Avidya* or ignorance is non-existent. Thus, may you abide in your essential nature, and become free from the miseries of the world-process.

Section 80—*Spiritual Enquiry That Promotes Vairagya*

Sage Vasistha said: O Rama, a Sage endowed with spiritual enquiry is not tempted even when celestial enjoyments present themselves before him.

The eyes are meant to perceive forms. But it is due to identification that the *Jiva* (the individual soul) experiences pleasure and pain caused by the perceptions of the eyes. Just as an ox carries some valuable burden while the owner of the ox is the enjoyer of that burden, in the same manner, the eyes carry perceptions that are enjoyed by the *Jiva*, the owner of the eyes.

The very same *Jiva* (being essentially the Self) is not only the owner of the eyes but also the owner of desires, Karmic impressions, subtle desires (*Vasanas*) and their numerous expressions. This being so, why should the *Jiva* allow itself to be immersed in the perceptions of the eyes alone?

If, in a vast army, a donkey accidentally falls in a small lake and drowns, the general must move on without being concerned. Much in the same manner, with spiritual enquiry one must not give so much importance to one particular sense-perception and become identified with it, but rather move on undaunted.

Further, when a person discovers his mastery over the senses, he is in a position to restrain the senses from undesirable objects. He reflects thus:

O Eyes, why do you sink in the swampy lands of forms. The beauteous forms of wife, children, and other relatives are transient in nature. Why should you become deluded by them?

O Eyes, the objects of the world are charming only from a superficial point of view. They are all hastily moving towards the wide-open jaws of death. If you pursue them, you too will be devoured by death.

O Eyes, it is the Self that illumines the objects without being attached to them. Therefore, do not assert your own independent existence. A mirror reflecting the light of the sun cannot boast of its own luminosity. Thus knowing, even like the Self, learn to be a witness of all that is seen.

O *Chitta*, while the eyes are gazing into the vacant sky, often there is blurring of vision, and the eyes perceive illusory forms swirling in space—forms that appear like the feathers of a peacock or circular forms of various types—but knowing that they do not exist, you are not attached to them. In the same manner, the objects of the world are in reality non-existent. Therefore, though the eyes continue to perceive them, you should not give validity to them.

O *Chitta*, you are merely the sustainer of reflections. Why then should you become affected by the reflected forms caused by the eyes?

When looking into a mirror, the face, the mirror, and the reflection in the mirror are all different from

each other, although at the same time they are identified with each other due to illusion. In the same manner, the Self, the *Chitta* and the *Jiva* are different from each other, but they are identified due to ignorance. That is why the *Jiva* (which is essentially the Self) becomes agitated when the senses come into contact with the objects and cause agitation in the *Chitta*.

It is the wax of ignorance that has glued the *Chitta* to the objects of the world. When the fire of knowledge melts this wax, the *Chitta* discovers the fact that it is ever detached from the objects of the world.

O *Chitta*, you create your own bondage like a spider that becomes entangled in its own web. You create the web of thoughts and desires, and then allow yourself to be limited and conditioned by them. Endeavor to destroy this self-created web by the practice of serenity, self-control, and spiritual enquiry.

Even this *Chitta* itself is not the reality. It is annihilated when ignorance is destroyed. Just as an evil spirit is driven from a temple, so too, this *Chitta* must be driven from the temple of one's heart, because, as long as the *Chitta* exists, the senses will continue to be fed with illusion.

O *Chitta*, you are grieving in vain. I have discovered the method of annihilating you. You have a beginning as well as an end, and therefore, are devoid of reality. Even at present your existence is apparent and not real.

O *Chitta*, why then do you frighten me by your rumblings? I am the Self, the detached Spirit that sustains your illusory existence.

O wicked *Chitta*, you and the senses cannot cause joy or sorrow in my heart. Why do you allow yourself to be consumed by worrying over the objects of the world, which are only like some magic show of a magician?

O *Chitta*, it does not matter to me whether you continue to exist or cease to exist, because you are not mine and I do not belong to you. By the force of enquiry I have discovered the fact that you are already dead. Lo! I have rendered you non-existent.

O *Chitta*, for a long, long time you have deprived me of the shining treasures of the Spirit in the form of good association and virtuous qualities such as serenity, self-control, reflection and wisdom. O evil spirit of *Chitta*, now get out of my residence (body) along with your she-companion cravings and your inauspicious attendants anger, greed, passion and others.

It is indeed amazing to realize that this world is overpowered by the *Chitta*, which can be rendered void in a moment by the force of wisdom.

O *Chitta*, you assert your power over the dead. Is this your heroism? I would really consider you heroic if you dared to exercise your power over Me who is the Self.

O ignorant *Chitta*, I do not have to destroy you because you are already destroyed. The very fact that I know your non-existence is enough to destroy you.

By the very force of *Vichara* (spiritual enquiry), worry has been exterminated, mind has been rendered dead, and ego-sense has been destroyed. Now freed of all duality and disharmony, I exist as the non-dual Self.

What is my mind? What is my desire? What is my ego? Fortunately these illusions have been dispelled from me.

I alone Am. I am the One, Indestructible, Eternal, ever Blissful, Pure Consciousness. Adorations to Me alone.

I have neither grief nor delusion. I am distinct from the ego, mind and senses. I am the Self sustaining all names and forms. I am one without a second. Adorations to Me.

I am the source of all the worlds. I am the Reality unaffected by the three periods of time. I am the Eternal, Imperishable, All-pervading Self. Adorations to Me.

The mountains, the oceans, the earth and the rivers are all nothing but Myself. Or, being illusory, all these are non-existent. I alone exist in My own glory. I am beyond the reach of the mind and senses, I am the ocean of bliss, I am unborn, immortal, attributeless Divinity. Adorations to Me!

Section 81—Negation of the Chitta

Sage Vasistha continued: O Rama, the *Chitta*, which enables a person to discover the reality of the Self and the unreality of the world-process, should be enquired into and discovered to be non-existent in the light of intuitive reason.

Whence has this *Chitta* arisen? Like a tree in the sky, or like the motion of objects perceived from a racing vehicle, this *Chitta* is false. Though non-existent, how has it lead the soul to the state of bondage, and how does it lead the soul to Liberation? All this is indeed baffling to the limited intellect of a person.

A wise Sage should thus assert: All my doubts are gone. I am free from the fever of grief. I abide in my essential nature. With the cessation of the *Chitta*, all cravings have fled.

The *Chitta* is dead. The cravings have disappeared. Delusion has dwindled. The Self has been awakened from the sleep of ignorance. I have realized the Self.

With the perception of the falsity of the *Chitta*, this world has become nothing but *Brahman*. All dualities have melted in *Brahman*. What else is there for me to think of? What is there for me to desire?

I am ever established in the homogeneity of the Self. I am ever balanced and harmonized. It does not matter to me whether the *Chitta* stays or flees, whether it exists or it becomes non-existent.

When the mind itself is negated, there is neither thinking nor the thinker. Now I abide in *Turiya*—that state which transcends waking, dream and deep sleep, and that which is designated by the mystic letter *Om*.

O Rama, thus should a wise person reflect on the negation of the *Chitta* and the affirmation of the Self. This practice must be maintained at all times—while eating, sleeping, walking, standing, sitting, or in any condition.

Abiding in the Self, a Sage will continue to perform actions in daily life unaffected by their fruits. Freed of pride and vanity, endowed with serenity, the face of a Sage shines like the moon due to the fullness of joy. With unbounded wisdom, he exists in the world performing deeds that are in harmony with the scriptures.

Section 82—*The Practice of Enquiry* by Sage Vitahavya

Sri Vasistha continued: O Rama, listen to the manner in which Sage Vitahavya practised spiritual enquiry leading him to the state of Enlightenment. Long, long ago, Sage Vitahavya found the world as an ocean of disease, death and suffering. Abiding in the forests of the Vindhya Mountains, he thus developed intense dispassion towards the objects of the world.

Desirous of attaining Enlightenment, he took to *Sanyasa* (renunciation). Then he entered into a hut made of plantain leaves and, seated in lotus pose on a deerskin, sought refuge in the Self within. He commenced the practice of meditation and enquiry.

Just as the setting sun withdraws its rays, even so he withdrew the scattered rays of the mind from the objects of the world and directed his mind towards the heart. Then renouncing the external and internal contacts with the objects of the world, he freed his mind of the subtle contacts in the form of *Vasanas* (subtle desires). In his purified mind he commenced spiritual enquiry in the following manner:

He said to himself: Lo! How amazing it is that the mind does not find rest even for a moment. It is ever shaken by the objects of the world, even like a leaf that is tossed by the turbulent waves of the ocean.

Like a ball being tossed back and forth, the mind continues to jump from object to object. In this way it continues to maintain its dance of delusion.

Whatever object one tries to restrain the mind from, towards that very object it runs like an intoxicated horse. It runs to divergent objects, even like a monkey jumping from one branch to another among the trees of a forest.

Let me hold a serious enquiry into the mind and senses, which are the internal instruments for the soul.

O unfortunate senses, unable to experience the bliss of *Samadhi*, you are constantly being tossed by the restless waves of the world. Why do you perpetuate your restless movements? By doing so, you only create sorrow and grief for yourselves. Why don't you recall your experiences of the past which led you to so many sufferings?

O senses, you are in fact extensions of the mind itself. You do not have an independent existence. You appear like a mirage in the desert. I, the witness Self, am the Light behind your functions. Without Me you are non-existent. This being so, why do you try to frighten Me? You are as false as the illusion of a snake seen in a rope during darkness.

Just as a traveller keeps himself away from poisonous snakes, or a *Brahmin* keeps himself distant from the *Chandalas* (outcastes), in the same manner, the Self keeps Itself at a far distance from you.

O *Chitta* It is the light proceeding from the Self that sustains your transient existence. But unaware of this, you continue to seek pleasures of the objects even like street dogs that continue to indiscriminately look for food.

O wicked one! Your conviction that you are endowed with consciousness is illusory. Without the Light of the Self you are non-existent. In vain you have created the illusory ego-center.

The attitudes of the ego are like drifting clouds that do not affect the sky. They rumble and rain in

vain. The Self is ever untouched by the illusions created by the egoistic vision of a person.

When it is impossible for you to account for your own existence, how can you give sustenance to others. The Self from which you borrow the light of consciousness is the only reality. O dull-witted one, why have you appeared in vain?

Objects that appear like nectar in the beginning turn out to be like poison in the end. In spite of this, O *Chitta*, you continue to gather the impressions of actorship and enjoyership in vain.

O foolish one, do not be ridiculous and continue to wander on the vehicles of the senses. You are neither the enjoyer nor the actor. You are inert and illusory. You are illumined by the Self.

O *Chitta*, in what manner are you related to the objects, or in what way are the objects related to you? You who are inert, with only an apparent existence, how can you have relatives and friends in this world?

If you consider yourself as the Self, then why should you become involved in the numerous desires related to the objects. Renounce all desires and you will find yourself reduced to *Chit*—Pure Consciousness.

Now, O *Chitta*, listen to the following teachings that will free you of the disease of actorship and enjoyership. Without a doubt you are inert like a rock, so how can actorship develop in you? How can stone statues perform an entertaining dance? If you say that

stone statues can perform a dance with the help of someone else, then, I counsel you, O Chitta, to recognize it to be the Divine Self, Who is the Light behind your functions.

The sickle that cuts crops cannot boast of doing so by itself. The real doer is the person who uses the sickle. Much in the same manner, O Chitta, you are merely an instrument in Divine Hands. It is the Self that acts and enjoys through you who are but an instrument, and even that, in an illusory form.

Vessels only hold water; they do not enjoy the drinking of the water. In the same manner, you hold impressions of the objects, but you cannot be considered the enjoyer of them. It is the Self that is the real enjoyer.

O Chitta, you are inert by nature. How can the sense of doership exist in you? How can a stone statue dance without the help of a sentient being? It is because you are sustained by the Light of the Self that you perform various actions; by yourself you are non-existent.

O Chitta, you become existent by the power of ignorance, and you dissolve into the Self by the power of knowledge. From the absolute point of view, you are non-existent. Therefore, do not become the basis of repeated birth and death due to your identification with the body.

O dull-witted one, when, by the knowledge of the Self, you become one with the Self, you will not be

able to create the dualities that cause fear and grief.
Therefore, why do you dance in vain?

O *Chitta*, you are not different from the Self; even this body is a manifestation of the Self. Since all this is the Self, why do you continue to wander in the dream-world of "I-ness" and "mine-ness"?

Why do you become identified with the body and assert, "I am young." "I am old." "These are my dear relatives." "These are my possessions."? Become one with the Self and discover the illusoriness behind all these thoughts and desires.

This world is nothing but a blend of shadow and light, and that which is inert, like shadow, does not exist. The light of consciousness is the only reality. Much in the same manner, when the inert aspect of the *Chitta* is negated by wisdom, it reduces itself into the pure state of consciousness.

O *Chitta*, you should worry about yourself and about those who belong to the same status of reality as you. Since God or the Divine Self is totally different from you, you should not worry about Him. You should not grieve about the Self which illumines your illusory existence.

O *Chitta*, why do you torment yourself by developing the illusion of caring for the Self. The Self is not in need of enjoyments; It is the embodiment of Bliss. The mind, intellect, senses and *Pranas* are inert, and thus do not need enjoyment. Therefore, your concern of presenting enjoyments to the Self is meaningless.

This world is filled with the glory of the Self. Why do you imagine anything other than the Self? All dualities are born of *Maya*, and are therefore illusory.

Just as a flower is unable to unite itself with its resulting fruit, in the same way, it is impossible for you to develop a relationship of union with the Self. (When fruit develops, the flower does not exist, in the same manner, when the Self is realized, the *Chitta* ceases to exist.)

O *Chitta*, when you proceed towards Enlightenment, you are negated, and the Self that sustains your illusory existence shines forth in Its own glory. If such a mystic relationship is what you want, then indeed it is a blessed movement. May you enjoy the expansive horizons of *Samadhi* until the Self is realized.

Your movement towards the objects of the world will only promote increasing misery, but your movement towards the Self leads to unending bliss.

Just as ether is devoid of limbs, in the same way, the Self is devoid of the sense of actorship and enjoyership. Just as waves, foam and bubbles arise in the ocean, in the same way, this world arises in *Brahman*. In fact, the world is only an appearance sustained by the reality of *Brahman*.

O *Chitta*, how can the limitations of the world be imposed on the Self Who is the beginningless, all-pervading and all-transcending reality? Can anyone write the scriptures in the sky?

O *Chitta*, if you have developed a firm understanding that the Self alone exists, permeating all the directions, then all my miseries have come to an end, because this world is as illusory as a mirage in the desert.

**Section 83—*Bliss of the Self Transcending
the Chitta and the Indriyas***

Sage Vasistha continued: O Rama, Sage Vitahavya, being endowed with a steady intellect, addressed his senses and *Chitta* in the following manner:

O Senses, you maintain your existence due to ignorance. You are the source of endless misery because you give rise to repeated embodiments. You exist in the absence of spiritual enquiry. But now, since I have discovered the Self, you have become non-existent.

O *Chitta*, you are indeed pitiable. Like a blazing fire you continue to burn within yourself and cause sufferings to those who become involved in you. You are the source of attachment and hatred, from which numerous streams of illusion continue to flow to the ocean of the world-process.

Like torrential rains descending from the clouds, miseries arise from you in the form of defeat, failure, disease and death.

Entwined with the snakes of desire, decked with the frost of frustration, this spider of the *Chitta* continues to weave the web of illusions in the heart of every person.*

Like an inauspicious bird, this *Chitta* continues to destroy the fruits of virtues in the form of serenity, self-control, righteousness and all forms of goodness by pecking upon them with its beak of pleasure and pain.

Like a wild cock, this *Chitta* sends forth its harsh note of passion and unravels numerous impurities of the heart from the heap of the *Vasanas* (subtle desires).

In the dark night of delusion, the *Chitta* hoots in the tree of the human personality, and its sound forebodes inauspiciousness and misery.

O *Chitta*, in your absence all auspicious qualities begin to bloom like a lotus during sunrise. But in your presence, they wither as if affected by frost.

Behold, O *Chitta*, in me you have attained a state of purity like a lake without waves. The lotuses of divine qualities are unfolding their petals. There blooms the beautiful lotus of *Maitri* (friendliness towards all), compassion and other divine virtues.

*The Sage addresses the *Chitta*, mind and senses in a figurative manner. The intention is to reveal their nature and functions, and also the fact they are the products of *Avidya* (ignorance). This being so, the style switches back and forth from addressing them to reflecting upon their nature.



Behold, O Chitta, in me you have attained a state of purity like a lake without waves. The Lotuses of Divine Qualities are unfolding their petals. There blooms the beautiful Lotus of Friendliness, Compassion and other Divine Virtues.

Just as the sun reveals itself when the clouds dissolve, in the same way, as you dissolve by the force of reflection, wisdom continues to reveal itself even like the sun.

When a raging storm subsides, the ocean resumes its calmness and placidity. In the same manner, with the subsiding of the wind of distractions, the *Chitta* becomes endowed with cheerfulness, depth of vision and tranquility.

O *Chitta*, you have two choices before you. Either you exist as the Self or you accept your utter non-existence. I believe that you will choose the former—to exist as the Self by negating your apparent form. This indeed will be a glorious act leading to boundless bliss.

O *Chitta*, if your present form were real, I would not have uttered these words. But on the basis of the scriptures and my own experience, I have found that the continuity of your present form is fraught with frightful afflictions. On the other hand, the dissolution of your present form paves the way for the blossoming of numerous divine qualities.

You maintain your present form because you lack spiritual enquiry. Take recourse to spiritual enquiry and you will subject yourself to a mystic self-immolation, which is the source of all that is good and beautiful.

Fortunately I am not entangled in the web of desires woven by the unenlightened *Chitta*. I now

abide in *Turiya*—the transcendental Self. Immersed in the glorious vision of the Self, I find the *Chitta* non-existent. The *Chit* (Pure Consciousness) alone is. How can there be duality in the Self that is eternal and infinite?

Having negated ignorance in the *Chitta*, having crossed the misty realms of *Vasanas* (subtle desires), having transcended the senses, mind, intellect and *Pranas*, I abide in the Supreme Self which is homogeneous and wherein the world-process ceases to exist.

Section 84—*Experiences of Vitahavya during the State of Samadhi*

Sage Vasistha continued: O Rama, having thus resolved, Sage Vitahavya renounced all the *Vasanas* of his mind and entered into deep *Samadhi* in a cave of the Vindhya Mountains.

During that time, owing to the blissful experience of *Brahman*, the mind of the Sage became still like the ocean without waves and his personality was decked with a heavenly beauty.

Just as blazing flames terminate when the fuel is exhausted, in the same way, without the fuel of *Vasanas*, the varied functions of the *Pranas* ceased in the heart of the Sage.

His eyes being half-closed, neither was he aware of external objects nor of the internal thought-waves. His vision was turned towards the Self.

Seated in a meditative pose with his head, neck and spine in a straight line, the body of the Sage appeared like a statue carved out of a rock.

Three hundred years passed and Vitahavya continued to be immersed in *Samadhi*. Enjoying the bliss of *Samadhi*, the Sage felt as if only half an hour had passed.

During this time, numerous clouds gathered in the sky with thunder, lightning and torrential rains, but yet the Sage remained unconcerned. Many kings went out into the forests to hunt animals, yet the Sage was unaware. Cold winters came followed by fierce hot summers, and yet the Sage did not "wake up" from *Samadhi*. Time and again the birds sang, elephants trumpeted, lions roared, earthquakes rumbled, fires blazed, rivers and streams flooded, but the Sage remained unmoved.

Year after year the flood waters brought great quantities of mud into the cave, so much so that with the passage of time the body of the Sage became buried. Then led by his *Prarabdha Karma* he woke up from *Samadhi*, and, although still buried in the earth, began to recollect his varied experiences while in *Samadhi*.

He recollected how he became a Muni who practised deep reflection under the Kadamba tree for

a hundred years. Then for another hundred years he existed as a *Vidyadhara* (a celestial being). For five *Yugas* (great ages) he abode as Indra, ruling the heavenly world. And for a *Kalpa* (many cycles of *Yugas*) he existed as a Shiva-Gana (an attendant of Lord Shiva).

Sri Rama asked: O Sage, how was it possible for the Sage to experience different orders of time and space while abiding in the cave of the Vindhya Mountains?

Sri Vasistha explained: O Rama, time and space are illusory in nature. See how a different order of time and space arises in your dream. The dream world arises in the minute space of the *Hita Nadi* (the mystic vital channel located at the throat).

It is the conditioned mind that gives reality to a certain order of time and space. This being so, it is easy to reconcile the apparent discrepancies in the experiences of the Sage.

The Sage, having acquired numerous experiences through his mental embodiments in the form of Indra, Muni, Vidyadhara and the attendant of Shiva, finally attained Enlightenment and the seeds of his Karmas were burnt up by the fire of knowledge.

O Rama, from the point of view of an enlightened Sage there is neither bondage nor release. *Brahman* alone exists. And since a Sage becomes the Self of all, there is no fault in saying that he is the experiencer through every being, whether of the past, present or future.

O Rama, listen to the wondrous nature of creation. The Indra with which the Sage was identified during his *Samadhi* has since passed through many embodiments, and presently he exists as a king in a certain country.

During his identification with Shiva-Gana, he used to play with a swan. That swan has now incarnated as the King of the Nishadas.

O Rama, countless worlds continue to arise out of *Brahman*, abide in *Brahman* and merge in *Brahman*. Yet at the same time, since *Brahman* alone is, nothing arises out of *Brahman*.

Section 85—*The Revival of the Body of Sage Vitahavya*

Sri Rama asked: O Sage, please explain to me the manner in which Sage Vitahavya revived his body, and then lived his daily life after Enlightenment.

Sage Vasistha replied: O Rama, during his inward reflections, Sage Vitahavya mentally became an attendant of Lord Shiva. As a Shiva Gana (Shiva's attendant), he developed the wish to know his past embodiments. As his vision swept over his numerous embodiments, he became aware of the fact that as Vitahavya his body was buried deep in the earth. Then, led by his *Prarabdha* (fructifying Karma), Sage Vitahavya determined to revive the body.

It so happened that while in *Samadhi*, the body of Vitahavya was carried a long distance by a flood, and was then buried in mud; it was in a prone position and was covered with layers of clay, grass and straw. Seeing this body like a worm buried in mud, as a Shiva Gana he inspired Pingala, an attendant of the Sun-god (Surya), to enter the body of Vitahavya and revive it. Pingala then entered the body of Sage Vitahavya, even as a bird enters its nest.

By the power of Pingala, the body of the Sage was brought up and out of the layers of mud and grass, much in the same manner as a lotus emerges from a muddy lake. Then having mutually adored each other, the heavenly Pingala returned to the Sun-god and Sage Vitahavya returned to normal consciousness in this relative world.

The Sage entered a river and cleansed his body. He then performed worship of the Sun-god and, passing the day by the banks of a river in a valley of the Vindhya Mountains, he engaged himself in the practice of inward reflection. He was devoid of all attachments and was decked with all divine qualities.

Section 86—*Characteristics of Jivan Mukti and Preparation for Videha Mukti*

Sage Vasistha continued: As evening approached, Sage Vitahavya entered a cave of the Vindhya Mountains and adopted a meditative pose. He began to reflect within himself thus:

I have already renounced the senses. What have I to do with the objects of the world? I am like the ever-risen sun. There is neither existence nor non-existence for me who is the Self. Though sleeping, I am awake. Though dead, I am eternally alive. I am ever established in *Turiya*, wherein the three states of waking, dream and deep sleep are transcended.

Thus reflecting, Sage Vitahavya passed six days and nights, and then, coming back to normal consciousness, passed his days in the spirit of Enlightenment. He did not praise any object, nor did he have any reason to condemn any object. Devoid of attachment and hatred, he was ever free from elation and depression.

In the spirit of sport, he sustained a stream of enquiry within himself, as if talking to his mind and senses in the following manner:

O Mind, the lord of the senses, behold the result of serenity. You are able to reflect the glorious Self. You have attained *Brahman*, who is the very embodiment of bliss.

Therefore, in the future, learn to function without being swayed by attachment or hatred, and without being distracted by the objects of the world.

O Senses, I have discovered your thieving nature. Your hopes are frustrated. You cannot steal the wealth of the Self any more. You do not even exist as a reality.

O Senses, it was ignorance that promoted your illusory existence. But now, having realized the Self, I have found you to be non-existent. I do not blame you for the miseries you have created.

Wood abides in the trees of the forest. Axes that cut the wood abide in iron. A rope that binds wood comes from the fiber of bamboo trees. A carpenter works with the wood for the sake of earning a living. When a house is built, who is considered responsible?—the wood of the forest, the axes that cut the wood, the rope that tied the logs into bundles, or the carpenter who worked on the house? Much in the same way, with deep analysis, actorship and enjoyership cannot be attributed to the spirit, the mind, the senses, or to the body. The fact is, the sense of actorship and enjoyership has arisen out of ignorance, and with the removal of ignorance, the Self is realized as the eternal and immutable reality.

Having thus developed the vision of the immutable Self, the Sage lived for many years, all the while enjoying freedom from the illusions of the mind. Though performing his external duties, he was ever immersed in the Supreme Self—the Mass of Bliss.

Having realized that the *Prarabdha Karma* that sustained his body was coming to an end, he prepared himself for *Videha Mukti* (disembodied Liberation), and for the last time accosted his mind, senses, and the world in the following manner:

O attachment, you have now become non-existent for me. O hatred, you have become extinct

forever. Both of you have accompanied me through this world-process for a long, long time.

O enjoyments of the world, adorations to you. You have provided entertainments for me through millions of embodiments. You made me forget the bliss of the Self. But now you have become non-existent!

O miseries, I am indeed grateful to you. Having afflicted me in various ways, you paved the way for the practice of enquiry and reflection. You became the teacher of the path of Liberation. Adorations to you!

O friendly body, in vain do you exist in this world-process. I have been joined to embodiment for a long, long time. But now, having attained Enlightenment, I must part from you forever. Do not blame me. This world is sustained for the sake of the Self alone. Having helped me attain Self-realization, you have brought yourself to total destruction. Behold the vanity of this world!

O mother craving, I am departing from you forever. In my absence you will gradually wane and become non-existent. But do not grieve, for such is the nature of all things that are born; they must die and disappear. My adorations to you!

O virtuous Karmas, you have protected me from the sufferings of hell and entertained me with heavenly enjoyments. But now I have no need for you. My goodbye to you.

My adorations to the sinful Karmas as well. O sinful Karmas, although you have led me through hellish sufferings, now I am beyond virtue and vice. Good-bye to you.

O mountain cave, you have nourished me and consorted with me even like a dear wife. It was you who gave me solace and peace when I was afflicted by the world. You have been a true friend because you have assisted me in attaining the glorious state of Self-realization. But now I must depart from you. Adorations to you.

O stick, you have protected me from the wild animals of the forest, and have assisted me in crossing pits and traversing hilly grounds. You have been a sustenance in my old age. But now, my constant companion, I must depart from you.

Good-bye to food, comfort and various necessities of the body, for which I used to wander through the forests. I do not need you anymore.

My adorations to the *Pranas*. O *Pranas*, it is because of your assistance that I was able to enjoy different objects in different embodiments. Without you I could not have used the mind, the senses, the body and other objects. Now please retire to your source while I enter into my Essential Nature—*Brahman*.

Let the organ of smell enter the earth element. Let the organ of hearing enter the ether element. Let taste enter water, sight enter fire, and touch enter air. Let these elements in turn enter *Brahman*.

Let me chant *Om*, and meditating upon the *Ardhamatra*—the half-syllable of *Om* that symbolizes *Turiya* (the transcendental Self)—may I discard the body and enter into the Absolute.

Section 87—*Sage Vitahavya Attains Videha Mukti*

Sage Vasistha continued: O Rama, desirous of giving up his body through *Videha Mukti*, Sage Vitahavya took recourse to meditation on *Om*. He chanted a prolonged *Om* several times and meditated upon its implications (as described in *Mandukyopanishad*).

Meditating upon the “A” sound of *Om*, he identified himself with *Virat*—the Cosmic Being who has the entire physical universe as His body. Then merging “A” in “U”, he merged the physical consciousness with astral consciousness, and became one with *Hiranyagarbha*—the Cosmic Being for whom the entire astral universe is His body. Ascending higher, he merged “U” in “M”, his astral body into the causal body, and became one with *Ishwara*—the Cosmic Being for whom the entire causal universe is His body. And finally, meditating upon the *Ardhamatra*—the half-syllable of *Om* which is expressed in silence—he transcended the three planes of consciousness: physical, astral and causal, and became one with *Brahman*, the Absolute.

Abiding in his essential nature as *Brahman*, the Sage shone like the full moon, or like an ocean of peace. Just as wind carries fragrance, and having

given it up blows on, in the same way, the Sage gave up his senses and the subtle elements. He encountered an ocean of darkness, but crossed it by the force of his wisdom. He transcended the *Guna* of *Tamas*.

Then he encountered the light of *Sattwa*, which he crossed by the wings of wisdom. And having risen above darkness and light, the Sage became free of all duality. At this stage he spontaneously renounced the mind by the mind itself.

O Rama, the Sage then gave up the idea of individuality as spontaneously as a child gives up a fanciful notion. He then attained the state known as *Pashyanti*—the mystic sleep wherein the world is effaced from one's consciousness. And having crossed over this state, he attained the state of *Turiya*, the transcendental state of *Brahman*.

In the state of *Turiya*, though devoid of all worldly joys, the Sage became immersed in the boundless bliss of the Absolute; though devoid of his individual existence, he became one with Existence Absolute; though devoid of objects, he became the reality behind all names and forms. He attained that state of *Brahman* which is indicated in the scriptures by the terms "*Neti-Neti*"—"Not this. Not this."

He attained that Supreme State which is known differently by different philosophical systems. He became the Void of the Nihilists, the *Ishwara* of the Yoga system, the *Purusha* of the *Samkhya* system,

the Shiva of the Shiva worshippers, the Vishnu of the Vishnu worshippers; in fact, he became the Supreme Truth which is pure, birthless, non-dual and devoid of the world-process.

Sections 88 & 89—*Dissolution of the Elements in Videha Mukti and the Glory of Liberation*

Sage Vasistha continued: O Rama, having attained *Videha Mukti*, Sage Vitahavya became calm like an ocean without waves. He left his body of flesh and blood aside to wither like a dead lotus, and it eventually merged into the earth element. His *Pranas*, the subtle elements, his intellect, mind and senses all merged in the Cosmic Mind, which in turn merged in *Brahman*, the Absolute. Therefore, O Rama, adopt the path that was followed by Sage Vitahavya and become liberated from the world-process.

This very world which appears as a reality for the ignorant was perceived by Sage Vitahavya as a mental projection. Thus perceiving, he attained freedom from the cycles of birth and death.

Reflect upon the manner in which the Sage attained spiritual wisdom, destroyed the afflictions of attachment and hatred, freed himself of the knots of the heart (desire, action and ignorance), practised listening, reflection and meditation on the Divine Self, and having become a *Jivan Mukta*, finally entered into *Videha Mukti*.

O Rama, in the state of *Jivan Mukti*, Sage Vitahavya lived for a long time possessing a sorrowless mind. Though living in this world, he was unaffected by the currents of *Raga* and *Dwesha*.

Sri Rama asked: O Sage, please explain why Sage Vitahavya didn't develop psychic powers of various types. With such an intensive practice of meditation, he must have had the possibility of developing them. Why then did he ignore them?

Sage Vasistha answered: O Rama, those who are bent upon attaining Self-realization are not interested in psychic powers. Compared to the glory of Liberation, these powers are transient and insignificant. Birds fly through the air and fishes live in the water, but in spite of these *Siddhis* (powers) they are immersed in the world of misery. And those who develop these powers without the vision of Enlightenment are no better than the birds or fishes.

Whether he is a knower of *Brahman* or not, anyone can develop *Siddhis* by taking recourse to the practice of concentration, meditation and *Samadhi* on different objects. But since a knower of *Brahman* is not ruled by desires, he does not show any inclination to develop *Siddhis*. If, however, it is ordained by Cosmic Will, he develops them for the sake of doing good to others.

The knower of the Self is devoid of all desires, because all his desires are fulfilled in Self-realization. Sage Vitahavya retained his body until the exhaus-

tion of his *Prarabdha Karma*. He radiated harmony and peace from his personality while alive, and even after his death the animals of the forest did not touch his body because it was charged with the elevating vibrations of goodwill towards all.

O Rama, when the mind is free of thoughts of violence, it is unable to induce violent thoughts in others. On the other hand, it converts even a violent mind into a peaceful mind.

Even animals are affected by the elevated mind of a Yogi. Overcome by the divine influence of compassion and Cosmic Love, they give up their instinctive nature of violence in the presence of a Sage.

Those who inwardly harbor thoughts of attachment and hatred affect the minds of the wild animals negatively, and therefore, animals act violently towards them.

After the passage of time, the body of Sage Vitahavya, although unaffected by wild animals, attained a natural dissolution. His spirit, on the other hand, recovered its essential identity as *Brahman*.

Section 90—Two Types of Chitta-Nash

Sri Rama asked: O Sage, how can virtues develop in a Sage's mind, which has been negated by the intuitional knowledge of *Brahman*. How can a person perceive the qualities of water in a mirage? Please

explain, how did these great virtues develop in Sage Vitahavya, who had negated his mind?

Sage Vasistha replied: O Rama, there are two types of *Chitta-nash* (destruction of the *Chitta*): *Sarupa* (with form) and *Arupa* (without form). During the *Sarupa* state of destruction, the *Chitta* retains its form but is not tinged by attachment, hatred, egoism, or other impurities. It is like a crystal that reflects a color placed near it, but remains untouched by it. During the *Arupa* state of destruction, the *Chitta* merges in the Self. The first occurs during *Jivan Mukti* (Liberation in life) and the second during *Videha Mukti* (disembodied Liberation).

When one sees only the *Chitta* and not the Self, then the *Chitta* becomes the source of *Vasanas* (subtle desires) that lead to numerous embodiments. But when one sees the *Chitta* existing as an apparent reality sustained by the reality of the Self, then such a perception is the source of immense bliss.

A *Jivan Mukta* sees the *Chitta* with insight into its illusory nature, and though seeing it, his vision of the Self is ever unobstructed. Therefore, it is said that he has destroyed the *Chitta*. This is called *Sarupa-nash* of the *Chitta*, or destruction of the mind while its form remains.

In the case of a *Videha Mukta*, the *Chitta* is utterly negated. Even its form is destroyed, and the Self alone exists. A Sage has no need for his individualized existence. This is called *Arupa-nash* of the *Chitta*.

But as long as the *Chitta* continues to exist without undergoing the destruction explained above, so long will it continue to give rise to the thorny forest of the world-process.

Sri Rama asked: O Sage, what are the characteristics of the *Sarupa-nash* state of the *Chitta* possessed by illumined Sages? How does such a Sage conduct himself in this world of illusion?

Sage Vasistha replied: O Rama, you are the best among the enquirers. Just as a mountain remains unaffected by high winds and storms, in the same manner, a Sage remains unaffected by the miseries of life.

A Sage never sustains the idea that he is the body consisting of flesh and blood. He does not entertain the degrading thought that he is an individual person dependent upon the perishable objects of the world. Therefore, his mind is said to have attained the *Sarupa* state of destruction.

He whose mind is not depressed during adversity, who does not constrict his consciousness during difficult circumstances, who does not overflow with elation during prosperity, whose mind is never distracted due to the various happenings in this world—his *Chitta* has indeed attained the state of *Sarupa-nash*.

But as long as the mind thinks of objects and considers them as real, it has not attained the state of destruction. But when the mind has recognized the unreality of the objects and the reality of the Self

underlying them, it attains the state of *Sarupa-nash*. Such a mind is possessed by *Jivan Muktas*—those Liberated in life.

O Sinless Rama, the mind of a *Jivan Mukta* promotes the development of all virtuous qualities such as friendliness, compassion, cheerfulness, and universal love. Such a mind is freed of worldly *Vasanas* and is filled with *Brahma Vasanas* (impressions of mind's relentless flow towards *Brahman*). Such a mind is also known as *Sattwa* (purity personified).

Just as lustrous rays proceed from the moon spontaneously, so too great virtues proceed from a Sage whose mind is permeated by *Sattwa*.

Just as with the advent of spring, the Himalayan forests become adorned with numerous flowers, in the same manner, with the advent of *Chitta-nash*, the life of a Sage becomes decked with numerous spiritual qualities.

So far I have explained the characteristics of *Sarupa-nash* that exists in a *Jivan Mukta*. In the next stage, the mind attains the *Arupa-nash* state, when it merges in *Brahman* along with all these excellent qualities.

In the *Arupa-nash* state of mind, the world is completely negated in one's consciousness. And in that boundless expansion of non-duality, there is nothing more to hear, nothing more to see, nothing more to know; the Self alone Is.



Sri Swami Sivananda (1887—1965)
the Guru of the Author.

A *Videha Mukta*, in whom the mind exists in the *Arupa-nash* state, goes beyond all the concepts of the mind. He is neither endowed with virtuous qualities, nor is he devoid of them. In him there is the absence of all mental functions that give rise to elation and depression, to distraction and one-pointedness, and to the rise and fall of all thought-waves.

In that glorious state there are neither *Vasanas*, nor desires nor the absence of desires, nor attachment, nor existence nor the absence of existence. That Supreme State is devoid of darkness as well as of light, it is devoid of the stars, and of the sun and moon; that State is like the sky in autumn, devoid of the clouds of illusion.

Freed of the threefold miseries, a Sage enjoys a state similar to deep sleep, and though performing actions like the movement of limbs in sleep, his inward peace remains unobstructed at all times. Then with the cessation of his bodily existence, he who has been abiding in *Brahman* in life is said to have attained *Videha Mukti*—Disembodied Liberation.

Section 91—*The Cause of the World-Process*

Sri Rama asked: O Sage, this world is like a dense forest abounding with high mountains of obstacles. Numerous world-systems are the trees, stars are the flowers on those trees, and gods and demons are the birds abiding in them. Flashes of lightning

constitute its buds, the sun and moon are its blossoms, and the clouds are the glistening leaves of the trees of this forest. Numerous individual souls are the creatures abiding in this forest. What is the cause of this forest of the world-process, and how am I to remove it?

O Sage, individual souls are like creepers caught in this forest of the world-process. Birth, death and various changes are the knots in the stems of these creepers. *Maya* consists of the roots of these trees, which are firmly embedded in the earth (of the Absolute), and delusion is the water that nourishes these creepers. Please tell me, what is the seed of this creeper? And what is the seed of its seed?

Sage Vasistha explained: O Rama, the body, which is the basis of creating numerous Karmas, is the seed of this creeper of *Jivahood* that abides in the forest of the world-process. *Chitta* (the mind-stuff), which is the storehouse of the subtle impressions of good and evil, is the seed of the body. And this illusory world-process arises out of the *Chitta*, even as waves arise out of the ocean, or pots arise out of clay. The *Chitta*, in turn, has two seeds: *Prana-spandana* (vibrations of *Prana*) and *Vasana* (subtle desires).

When the *Pranas* fluctuate, the mind is formed much like a cloud in the Ether of Consciousness. And when the *Pranas* subside, the mind becomes non-existent. It is the *Pranic* fluctuations which give rise to the *Chitta* and become the basis of the perceptions of the senses, which constitute the world-process. The blueness in the sky, the greenery of the forests, the shimmering waves of the oceans, in fact, all that is

seen and experienced in this world are nothing but projections cast on the screen of consciousness by the fluctuations of the *Pranas*.

Prana-spandana and *Vasana* both go together to form the existence of the *Chitta*. If either of the two is eradicated, the other will automatically melt away, and thus, the *Chitta* itself will be reduced to its essential form, Pure Consciousness, bringing about the cessation of the world-process.

Led by ignorance, consciousness becomes externalized and involved in objects. The *Chitta* is thus formed and becomes the basis of endless miseries. But when one becomes detached from the objects in his consciousness, the *Chitta* becomes enlightened and Liberation is attained.

Yogis practise *Pranayama*, meditation, and the teachings of their spiritual preceptors in order to control their *Pranas*. Many great Sages adopt the method of *Prana-nirodha* (control of *Pranas*) as the basis for mastering the mind, while there are other Sages who master the mind by adopting the method of controlling the *Vasanas*. There are still others who adopt both methods in order to destroy the *Chitta*, thus ending the world-process.

Vasana in a human being is intensified because of the impressions of the body-idea sustained through numerous embodiments. The sense of "I-ness" and "mine-ness" intensifies the *Vasanas*, and overcome by *Vasanas*, the mind is unable to practise reflection or enquiry into the essential Self.

Swept by the strong currents of *Vasana*, whatever the soul imagines, that it becomes. While becoming one particular form, it loses the memories of many other forms that it had taken previously.

Led by the *Vasanas*, the soul considers the body as the Self and considers the objects of the world to be real. But when freed of the *Vasanas*, the soul rediscovers its essential nature as the Self and finds the world as an illusion.

When *Vasanas* are absent, the mind stops its mentations and the *Chitta* becomes free of its thought-waves. Then the state of Liberation reveals itself. But, O Rama, as long as the objects of the world are considered real, so long the *Chitta* will continue to exist, giving rise to the misery of the world-process. An aspirant, therefore, should practise the mystic art of negating the objects, and thus lead the mind to its own dissolution.

O Rama, that great soul who does not develop attachment towards the objects even while enjoying them, and whose mind does not fondly recall the experiences of past delights from objects, such a person has attained the state of "mind-lessness." He has become Liberated in life.

By sustaining likes and dislikes towards the objects of the world, one nourishes the *Pranas* as well as the *Vasanas*. But when one casts aside all likes and dislikes from his consciousness, and no longer remembers the objects of the world, he attains Liberation.

It is consciousness itself which has assumed the form of objects through the magical potency of *Vasana* and *Prana*. In fact, there is neither "inside" nor "outside" in consciousness. Just as experiences in dream, even the perception of one's own birth and death in dream, are nothing but illusory projections, in the same manner, all objects are unreal.

O Rama, true knowledge consists of the realization of the fact that all the three worlds (physical, astral and causal) are nothing but the Self. The Self alone exists as the non-dual Reality, transcending time and space.

When consciousness allows itself to be sustained by the illusory objects of the world by considering them as real, it is called *Samvit* (relative consciousness). A Sage, on the other hand, attains the state known as *Asamvit* (devoid of relative consciousness), but at the same time he is called *Ajada* (not-inert). Though engaged in numerous actions, he is ever untouched by Karmas and their fructifications.

In the state of the Absolute Self, the world is non-existent. There are neither gods, nor demons, nor Yakshas, nor Kinnaras, nor human beings, nor animals nor any other creatures. It is *Maya* which has created all these illusions.

O Rama, there are two forms of existence: the existence of multiplicity and the existence which is One and non-dual (Existence-in-itself). The perception of multiplicity is illusory, being sustained by

the *Pranas* and *Vasanas*, while the existence underlying the world of multiplicity is *Brahman* or the Absolute, also known as *Satta-Samanya*—the common basis for all forms of existence.

It is Pure Existence which has assumed various forms such as the existence of time, the existence of an object, or the existence of that which is subtle or that which is gross. By negating the existence of multiplicity, a Sage realizes the Self which is Pure Existence. Having attained this, O Rama, become free of the fear of rebirth.

Section 92—*Disciplines Leading to Wisdom*

Sri Rama asked: O Sage, you have explained the seed of the creeper of the world-process. What should a person do in order to eradicate this seed and attain Liberation?

Sri Vasistha continued: O Rama, an aspirant must endeavor to remove the seed of the world-process from his heart by seeking the sustenance of *Satta-samanya* (the Existence Absolute that sustains the illusion of all names and forms).

Whatever you think of, wherever you go, whatever you do, you are always the Self. All your movements, thoughts, and reflections are imagined in the Self. If you practise the awareness of the Self at all times, you will attain freedom from the world-process.

In order to accomplish this, you must endeavor to bring about the cessation of all *Vasanas* (subtle desires), and with the destruction of these *Vasanas*, you will immediately become free of the misery of the world-process. However, destruction of the *Vasanas* is more difficult than rooting out the Meru Mountains.

As long as the mind is not controlled, so long the *Vasanas* cannot be rooted out. As long as the *Vasanas* subsist, the mind maintains its limited existence. And as long as the mind exists in its limited form, so long there will be the absence of the intuitive knowledge of the Self.

O Rama, these three—*Tattwa Jnana* (knowledge of the Truth), *Vasana Kshaya* (destruction of the *Vasanas*), and *Manonash* (control of the mind)—are interdependent. Without knowledge of the Truth (the Self), it is impossible to attain *Manonash*, and without *Manonash*, it is impossible to attain the knowledge of the Self. The same applies in relation to the knowledge of the Self and the destruction of the *Vasanas*. Therefore, the three must be practised together.

The practice of these three is intensely difficult. However, if one were to develop *Vairagya* (dispassion), it becomes easier and simpler. Therefore, O Rama, turn your mind away from the pleasures of the senses by the force of your discriminative intellect.

If you are unable to practise these three methods together and in a sustained manner, you will not

attain the highest goal even after thousands of years. But when these three are practised with repeated effort for a considerable period of time, they lead to the highest goal.

O Rama, the practice of *Pranayama* is intimately related to the practice of *Vasana Kshaya*. Therefore, if you so choose you may blend the practice of *Pranayama* along with the above three methods.

O Rama, having approached an expert in Hatha Yoga, an aspirant should learn various *Asanas* (physical poses) and *Pranayamas* (methods of controlling the breath). He should practise *Bandhas*, *Mudras*, and *Kriyas*, and should take recourse to a *Satwic* diet which is conducive to success in the practice of these Yoga exercises. By doing so, he will be able to attain mastery over the *Pranas*. And when the *Pranas* are mastered, the *Chitta* is easily subjugated.

An aspirant should not keep company with those who are attached to the objects of the senses. In addition, he should endeavor to remove any inner attachments that exist in the mind by selflessly performing his daily duties.

By renouncing the desires for objects and developing an awareness of the illusoriness of the body, one brings about gradual reduction in the *Vasanas*. Just as when the wind subsides, dust particles do not form into a dust cloud, in the same manner, with the subsiding of the wind of *Vasanas*, the *Chitta* no longer flies in all directions.

Since the destruction of *Chitta* is impossible without controlling the fluctuation of the *Pranas*, an aspirant must endeavor to control the *Pranas* in order to hasten his movement towards Self-realization. Finding a secluded place, he should take recourse to the repeated practice of Yoga in order to master his mind and *Pranas*.

If Hatha Yoga does not suit an aspirant, he should practise the eight limbs of Raja Yoga. In all cases he must take recourse to the study of scriptures and association with Saints and Sages, because with the help of these two the mind is subjugated in the same manner as a wild elephant is subjugated with the help of a spear.

Good association, knowledge of the scriptures, renunciation of *Vasanas*, and control of the *Pranas* are the best methods of attaining Self-realization. Without taking recourse to these, those who adopt various austerities and disciplines led by their own whims and fancies are unable to attain the goal, in spite of their intense efforts.

Without taking recourse to these, those who spend their time performing various rituals, austerities, pilgrimages, and virtuous deeds are unable to root out suffering from their hearts. Their minds are like frightened deer in a forest, ever agitated and insecure. Like a stream descending from a mountain height, such a mind flows to the objects of the world, gathering the impressions of attachment and hatred.

Therefore, O Rama, take recourse to the methods that give rise to intuitive Realization of the Self. He who has attained wisdom is indeed happy, truly alive, and profoundly strong.

O Rama, withdraw the mind from the illusory objects of the world and direct it to *Brahman*. With a vision of inward detachment, continue to perform your duties in daily life. Be established in the state of mystic inaction even while performing actions in the world.

Section 93—*The Glory of Spiritual Enquiry and the Attainment of Wisdom*

Sage Vasistha continued: O Rama, even a little practice of *Vichara* (enquiry) can enable a person to have considerable control over his mind. He who has practised spiritual enquiry has indeed attained the highest fruit of his life. But he who lives without the practice of enquiry leads a fruitless existence.

Vichara is like the Kalpaka tree (the mystic tree that fulfills all desires). It sprouts in a pure heart, and then spreads its numerous ramifying branches in the form of serenity, self-control, compassion, non-violence and other virtues.

For one who is endowed with *Vichara* which has been intensified by the practice of *Vairagya* (dispassion), even the glorious worlds of the gods become insignificant.

The mind that has been embellished by *Vichara* is not agitated by the objects of the senses; it is not influenced by grief or sorrow, and it is not affected by the miseries of the world.

Tell me, O Rama, is it possible for a child to hold in his tender hands the furious winds charged with bolts of lightning? So too, it is impossible for the world to agitate the mind of a Sage.

Can glow-worms enable lotuses to bloom by their flickering lights? They cannot. Neither can the objects of the world with their transient values induce restless desires in the heart of a Sage.

Can a lion who is accomplished in killing elephants with his sharp claws be defeated by a gentle deer of the forest? Neither can the mind of a Sage be overpowered by the objects of the world.

Can little frogs devour a python? Neither can this little world consisting of the five sense-perceptions devour the intuitional vision of a Sage, which is capable of dissolving the entire world-process.

The spiritual wealth of a Sage who has attained the knowledge of the Self and who is ascending the glorious heights of wisdom cannot be stolen by thieves in the form of the senses.

An intellect which has not been rendered firm by the practice of enquiry is easily agitated by the objects of the senses; it acts like a creeper without a support, shuddering with every wind that blows.

Therefore, O Rama, take recourse to seclusion and reflect upon these questions—"What is the nature of this world?" "What will happen to the body after death?" "What is the nature of the Self?" "How am I to attain Self-realization?" Find the answers to these questions by the practice of enquiry conducted under the guidance of a spiritual preceptor.

When wisdom is attained, all misery is destroyed, much in the same manner as darkness is dispelled by the rising sun. Attainment of wisdom is the goal of the practice of spiritual enquiry.

A knower of the Self is like the Emperor of emperors. All his desires being fulfilled, he is the ruler and master of all names and forms that constitute this creation.

An enlightened Sage is ever detached from the world of sound. He sits unaffected in the midst of humming bees, the sweet melody of lute and flute, the captivating songs of the songstresses. He is ever unexcited by the soft sound of the blooming buds in the early hours of the dawn, as well as by the rumblings of the rain clouds. He is ever balanced in the midst of dancing peacocks with their loud screams as they rejoice in the rains descending from the heavens, as well as in the midst of warbling birds.

He is not agitated by any sound, whether it be the sweet music of stringed instruments and cymbals, or the jarring sounds of drums as they are beaten by rods.

Devoid of desire, his mind is unaffected by the world of touch, whether it be soft and captivating or hard and revolting. In a heavenly garden abounding with soft blooms, among the alluring limbs of heavenly maidens in an atmosphere that delights all the senses, a Sage finds himself like a swan that has fallen into a desert.

The world of diverse tastes has lost its enchantment over a Sage. He finds no delight in delicious fruits such as grapes, raisins, dates, sweet melons, oranges and others, nor does he thirst for honey or intoxicating wines, nor sweet beverages of various kinds. He does not delight in milk, curd, butter, or various dainty dishes prepared from them, nor does he hunger for food spiced and seasoned in various ways.

The world of sight, form, and color has no meaning for a Sage's mind, which is bathed in the Light of the Self. Whether he were to roam in the gardens of the heavenly gods such as Yama, Indra, Moon, Sun, and others, or sport among the verdant forests of the Himalayas, his mind would not be captivated by such sights.

His mind does not delight in the fascinating rays of the moon, nor is it elated by the grandeur of the rising sun. His eyes are not entranced by the beautiful limbs of heavenly *Apsaras*, nor are they captivated by the forms and colors of the earth.

Ever steady in intellect, a wise Sage is unaffected by the world of fragrance and smell, whether it be sweet or repugnant. Though abiding in won-

drous gardens that are redolent with fragrant flowers and aromatic herbs, or in places that abound with the stench of decaying objects, he is ever the same, unmoved and serene.

Whether it be the surging of a turbulent ocean, or the thundering of dark clouds, or the roaring of wild lions, the heart of a Sage does not tremble even in the midst of the most terrifying of sounds.

Let the intoxicated elephants trumpet, the *Pishachas* (the evil spirits that roam in the night) rend the atmosphere with their clamor, or the volcanoes erupt with their deep rumbling sounds—a Sage is ever unaffected.

Even if he were forced to walk on the edge of a sword, or struck down by lightning, or pierced by a sharp arrow, or injured by an explosion, a Sage remains unaffected within his heart.

Whether his *Prarabdha* leads him to a beautiful garden or to a dreary desert, whether he is given the varied pleasures of the senses or left confined in a dark well, whether he finds himself in a world sparkling with various forms of prosperity and glory or in a world that is inflicted with darkness and misery, a Sage is ever balanced in his mind.

Neither desiring dainty dishes, nor rejecting tasteless foods, he sustains his body until his *Prarabdha* terminates. He is free of attachment and hatred at all times, in all places, and in all circumstances.

But those who are restless and devoid of truth are incessantly affected by the objects of the senses. They are as easily devoured by the senses as tender grass is devoured by deer. Caught in the waves of the world-process and whirled in the whirlpools of desires, the ignorant are devoured by their senses, which act like sharks of the ocean.

On the other hand, endowed with the vision of the Self, a Sage develops the immutability of a mountain. He cannot be swept by the currents of the world-process nor affected by the sharks of the senses.

For a Sage who is immersed in the vision of *Samadhi*, this vast universe or an insignificant straw, poison or nectar, a moment or a duration of a thousand *Kalpas*, all appear to be the same; his mind sees no variations in them.

With his mind immersed in *Brahman*, a Yogi, though performing actions, is ever established in inaction. Though aware of objects, he is yet ever immersed in *Samadhi*. Though hearing, he does not hear; though seeing, he does not see; though touching, he does not touch; though smelling, he does not smell.

O Rama, attachment is the cause of bondage. Freedom from attachment gives rise to Liberation. Therefore, do not entertain thoughts of the objects in your mind; rather, develop supreme *Asanga* (detachment).

Sri Rama asked: O Glorious Sage, what is *Sanga*, and how am I to attain *Asanga*? Just as the wind

disperses the clouds in autumn, may you dispel the illusions of my mind.

Sage Vasistha replied: O Rama, that *Ashubha Vasana* (the impressions of anger, greed, passion and other impurities) which causes pleasure at the sight of a desirable object and pain at the sight of an undesirable one is called *Sanga* or attachment. But the *Shubha Vasana* (pure, subtle impressions of *Samadhi* and wisdom) which does not obstruct the vision of the Self and which enables a person to discover his inner identity with the Self is called *Asanga* or detachment. It exists as long as *Prarabdha* sustains the body of the Sage, and it brings about the termination of the world-process.

The *Vasana* that causes bondage is *Sanga* or attachment, while the *Vasana* that liberates the soul from the world-process is called *Asanga* or detachment. The former is to be abandoned, and the latter is to be promoted by an aspirant.

O Rama, if you maintain a balanced mind during pleasure and pain, during prosperity and adversity, during praise and censure, and if you never allow your mind to be affected by attachment, fear, or anger, you will attain the glorious state of *Asanga* or detachment.

If you do not wither during adversity, nor bloom during prosperity, you will not remain a slave to the restless desires of the mind. Then, though abiding in the world and performing various actions, you will remain inwardly detached from the world.

UPASHAMA PRAKARANA

When your *Chitta* (mind-stuff) becomes enlightened and you are able to behold the Self as the only reality behind all objects, you will no longer be a slave to the senses. You will attain the state of *Asanga*. It is this *Asanga* which blossoms into the state of *Jivan Mukti*—Liberation in life.

Endowed with *Asanga*, O Rama, be like a mountain in the midst of raging storms, or like the moon in the midst of drifting clouds. Do not degrade the mind through anger and hatred arising out of the illusion of duality. Rather, elevate your mind by the development of divine virtues and the practice of spiritual enquiry, and ultimately bring about the cessation of the world-process.

THUS ENDS UPASHAMA PRAKARANA



Sages descend into the royal court of King Dasharatha to listen to the teachings of Sage Vasistha.

SWAMI JYOTIRMAYANANDA THE GENIUS OF YOGA

Swami Jyotirmayananda was born on February 3, 1931, in a pious family in Dumari Buzurg, District Saran, Bihar, India, a northern province sanctified by the great Lord Buddha. From his very childhood he showed various marks of future saintliness: he was calm and reflective, brilliant in his work at school and college, and loved by all. A constant source of inspiration to those who came in contact with him, he never faltered in his high ethical ideals. Side by side with his studies and practical duties, he reflected upon life's deeper purpose.

An overwhelming feeling to serve humanity through a spiritual life led him to embrace the ancient order of Sanyasa on February 3, 1953, at the age of 22. Tirelessly he practised intense austerities, living in the Himalayan retreats by the sacred river Ganges. For over nine years he was a religious professor at the Yoga Vedanta Forest Academy. In addition to giving lectures on the *Upanishads*, *Raja Yoga* and all the important scriptures of India, he was the editor of the *Yoga Vedanta Journal*.

To his Guru, Sri Swami Sivananda Maharaj, Swami Jyotirmayananda was a gem; and on one occasion he told a group of his devotees that Swami Jyotirmayananda is a self-made Yogi, and that he is a dynamic exemplar of his teachings. Ever able to assist foreign students in their understanding of Yoga and Vedanta, his intuitive perception of their problems endeared him to all.

With an unusual dimension in his range and richness of wisdom, Swamiji never contradicts the great scriptures of the world, but rather through his unique explanations, adds to them. His exemplary life, great command of spiritual knowledge, love towards all beings, and impressive, dynamic expositions on Yoga and Vedanta philosophy attracted enormous interest all over India. He frequently lectured by invitation at the "All India Vedanta Conferences" in Delhi, Amritsar, Ludhiana, and other parts of India.

"Behind his vast erudition lies a sincere and feeling heart, yearning for the upliftment of seekers after Truth," wrote M. L. Bazaz, secretary-advisor to the late Prime Minister Nehru of India.

In 1962, after many requests, Swami Jyotirmayananda came to the West to spread the knowledge of India. Crossing Europe, he lectured in various countries. In 1964, he toured North and South America, inspiring and elevating thousands of Yoga students.

In Puerto Rico (from 1962 to 1969), as founder of *Sanatan Dharma Mandir*, he had rendered unique service to humanity through his regular classes, weekly radio lectures in English and in Spanish, and numerous TV appearances. In March 1969, he moved his center to Miami, where he also appeared on many TV and radio programs, and spoke at outstanding philosophical centers. Presently, Swami Jyotirmayananda conducts daily classes in *Raja Yoga*, *Bhagavad Gita*, *Yoga Vasistha*, Hatha Yoga and meditation at his Ashram—the Yoga Research Foundation.

Through his dynamic magazine, the *International Yoga Guide*, his radiant guidance and ever effulgent literature, Swami Jyotirmayananda stands forth as the glowing morning sun awakening sleeping hearts to a new dawn of bliss.

Today Swami Jyotirmayananda occupies a place of the highest order among the international men of wisdom. Swami Jyotirmayananda—The Genius of Yoga.

About Swami Jyotirmayananda and his Ashram

Swami Jyotirmayananda is well-recognized as the foremost proponent of Integral Yoga, a way of life and thought that synthesizes the various aspects of the ancient Yoga tradition into a comprehensive plan of personality integration.

Swami Jyotirmayananda has brought inspiration to thousands world-wide, yet still maintains an intimate setting at his main Ashram in Miami. A privileged few have the honor of actually studying and working under the direct guidance of Swamiji.

Both the Yoga Research Foundation and the main Ashram lie in the southwest section of Miami, two minutes from the University of Miami and 15 minutes from the Miami International Airport. The Yoga Research Foundation is located in a commercial area, easily accessible from anywhere in the county. In addition to the lecture hall, the Foundation also houses a bookshop, offices, warehouse, press, computer and publication facilities.

The main Ashram is on a two and a half acre plot surrounded by trees and exotic plants, reminiscent of a forest hermitage such as those used by the ancient Sages. Adjoining are subsidiary Ashrams that house student/residents and Foundation guests. The grounds are picturesque, with tall green eucalyptus trees swaying with freedom in the winds, mango blooms spreading their aroma of sublimity, birds singing a song of eternal joy, and a lake of lotus blooms reflecting the expansion of the Heavens. Surpassing them all, however, is the holy presence of Sage Swami Jyotirmayananda that fills the atmosphere with a silent message powerful enough to change the very destiny of mankind.

In such an environment, the soul is nurtured and nourished, allowing for a total education and evolution of one's Inner Self. With a Work/Study Scholarship, students are able to attend all classes conducted by Swamiji tuition-free. In return, students devote their talents and expertise to the Foundation's noble mission. Such opportunity is open to anybody who is devoted to the ideals of truth, non-violence and purity. If interested, write for more information.



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